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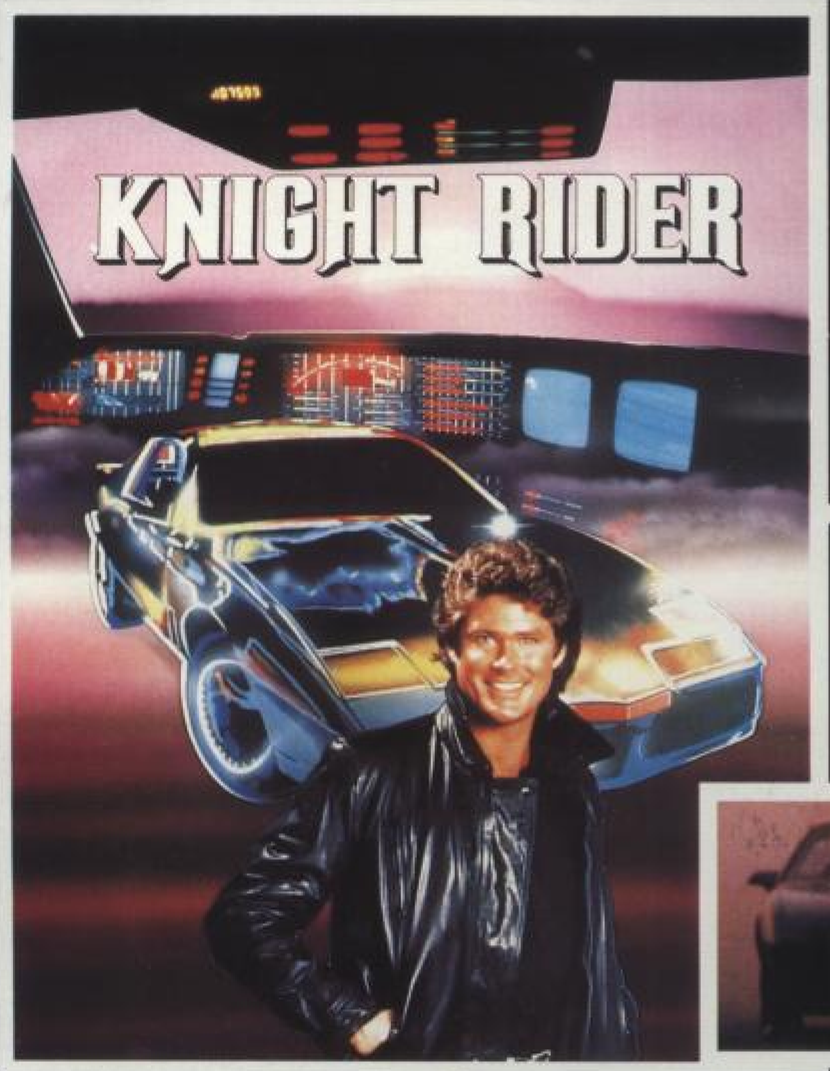
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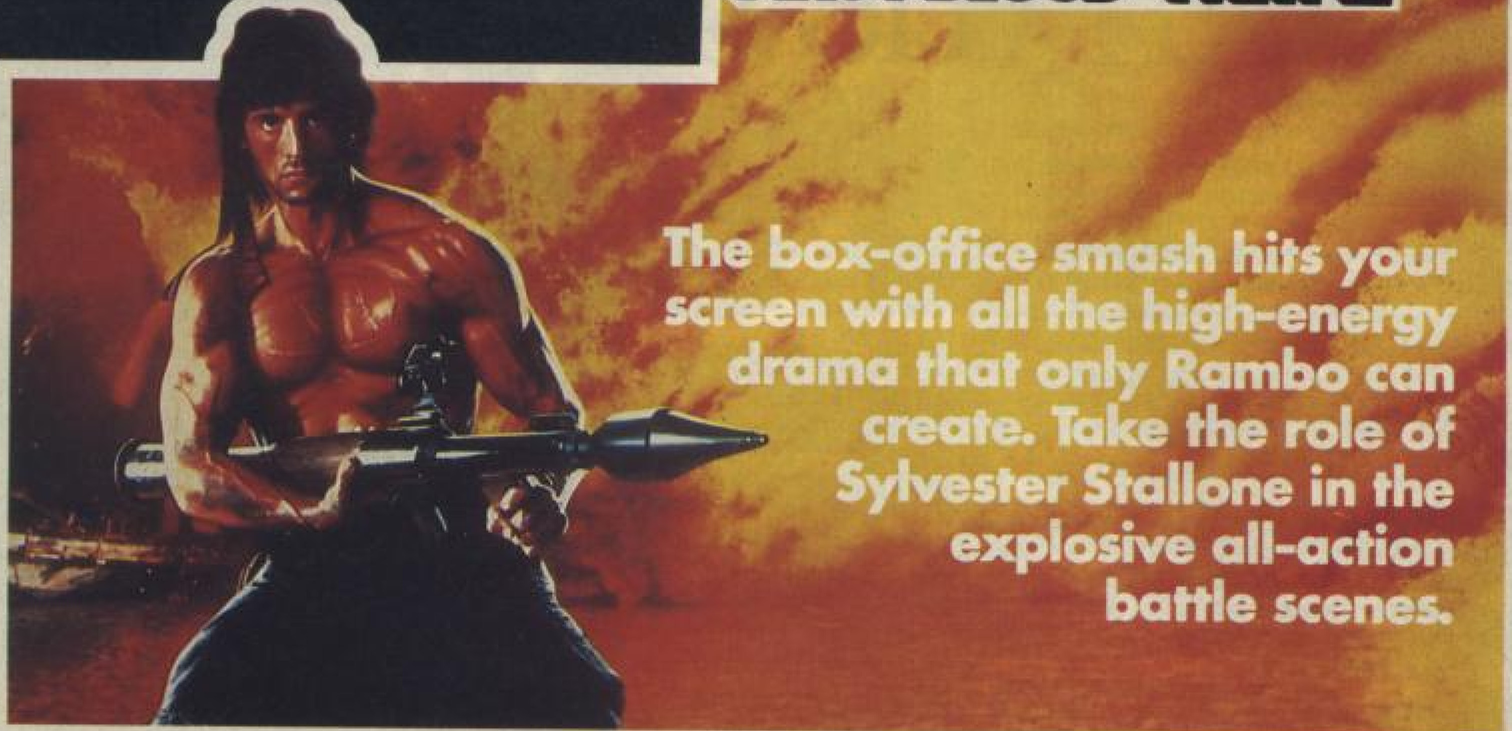
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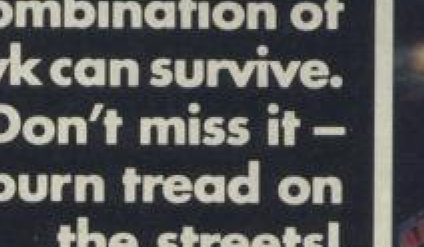
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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

ABC

DIY

THIRTEEN MAY BE UNLUCKY FOR SOME
But there's going to be lots and lots of winners in our Christmas Competitions this year. Can you afford the chance to pick up so many free goodies?

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180 FRONTLINE
Mr Masterson's Strategy Shop

The 23rd January is the first date in 1986 not to miss. February CRASH is in the shops, that's why!

CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION



FESTIVE FELICITATIONS

Ho Hum. Another eventful year comes to an end and the only polite thing to do is thank all the people and organisations whose efforts made 1985 fun and successful. Ta.

CRASH Towers started the year with what seemed like an endless supply of empty dungeons and corridors in which half a dozen people rattled around like peas in an empty supertanker. The spiders had room to breathe — but little to eat.

Now, twelve months later, we share our pitifully small offices with mountains of binders, the ZZAP! crew (whose arrival with a vanload of chattels and mess from Yeovil dramatically reduced our Lebensraum) and lots of new members of staff. It's difficult to avoid tripping over people, nowadays, as CRASH Towers is bursting at the seams with minions, reviewers, writers, gophers, gophers's gophers, artpersons, editors, NEC's, Apricots, Commodores and Amstrads. And the spiders are growing fat on the scraps of hurried office lunches.

Soon we will be wading through your Readers' Awards forms, and collating the results. On a lighter note, let's proceed with the CRASH Writer's Awards:

Oliver Frey — an award for remaining in the Art Garret of the Towers, painting covers with stinky inks with little regard for his health, sanity and complexion. AN UNCLOGGABLE AIRBRUSH

Franco Frey — for ploughing his way through endless reams of technobabble to render the incomprehensible, comprehensible. And for ruling the Mail Order department with a rod of ... well with a firm hand. A SELF-SIGNING GOLDEN CHEQUEBOOK.

David Western — for liaising with advertisers beyond the call of final deadlines, and for convincing our printers that we may be a day late but are still nice fellows. A SELF-FILLING, BOTTOMLESS TEA MUG.

Jeremy Spencer — for Editing Software, introducing us to Amstrads, wittering on endlessly about Amstrads, and then deserting to AMTIX! (and continuing to witter on about "Straddles") A FRIENDLY POKE IN THE EYE WITH A WET SPONGE while he witters on about Amstrads

John Minson — for scampering round the streets of London, attending launches and getting lots of freebie booze and grub down his neck before writing news items. A NICE, SOBER, PLAIN WHITE Van Heusen SHIRT

Gary Liddon — for deserting Domark, leaving them tealess, and coming to CRASH Towers and leaving *us* tealess while he covers the office in breakfast breadcrumbs. AN INEDIBLE RUBBER SANDWICH

Roger Kean — for running off to ZZAP! and becoming a Publishing Executive. SECOND GO AT THE WET SPONGE

Robin Candy — for spoiling the fun of people who can't bear not to read his pages, and for covering the office in Crisp Packets (empty). THE OLD PLAYING TIPS LOGO FOR ALL TIME

Auntie Aggie — for wearing her fingers to the bone as she sends off all your goodies while entertaining telephone callers. A GOLDEN JIFFY BAG

Dennis, the Subscription Queen — for appearing in the gossip column of the industry newspaper, *Computer Trade Weekly*. A PAGE THREE APPEARANCE IN "COOKS AND COOKERY"

The Competition Minion — for pestering people to stump up prizes, setting competitions and hiding in the broom cupboard. A ROUND OF DRINKS AT THE FROG AND LILYPAD (he pays)

Lloyd Mangram — for assiduosly (LMLWD) declining to be photographed, continually demanding more money and less work despite immense royalties earned on his dictionary, and for fighting off all the bugs in Bug Box. A BOTTLE OF HERMES CLEANING FLUID

Graeme Kidd — as nominated by the other inhabitants of the Towers — for frightening us all by shaving his head, wearing big shiny red Doc Martens and drinking too much Old Flatulence Bitter. A GREEN MOHICAN WIG

Messrs Penn and Rignall from ZZAP! — for mess-making beyond the call of duty, and changing the air in CRASH Towers to a subtle shade of blue. A TANKER FULL OF STYLING MOUSSE (three week's supply)

Ben Stone — for being a trendy London wide-boy who feels undressed without at least a Pringle Jumper, Nike shoes and stonewash jeans. A TESCO TEARAWAY ROMPER SUIT

Sally Newman, Mail Order Dragon — for nagging everyone beyond the call of duty A BOX OF FIRELIGHTERS TO GET STARTED ON COLD WINTER MORNINGS

De Grays, purveyors of sandwiches and sweetmeats to the Ludlow cognoscenti (LMLWD again), and to Gary Liddon — A REQUEST. Could you bar Gary Liddon? Pretty Please?

And finally, to Poddy, Mr Spencer's Dog — for keeping the office plant well watered. A BITE OUT OF MR LIDDON (And serve them both right, too)

And on that fine note, all that's left to do is wish all our readers, advertisers, printers, distributors, newsagents, typesetters, as well as software houses A HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

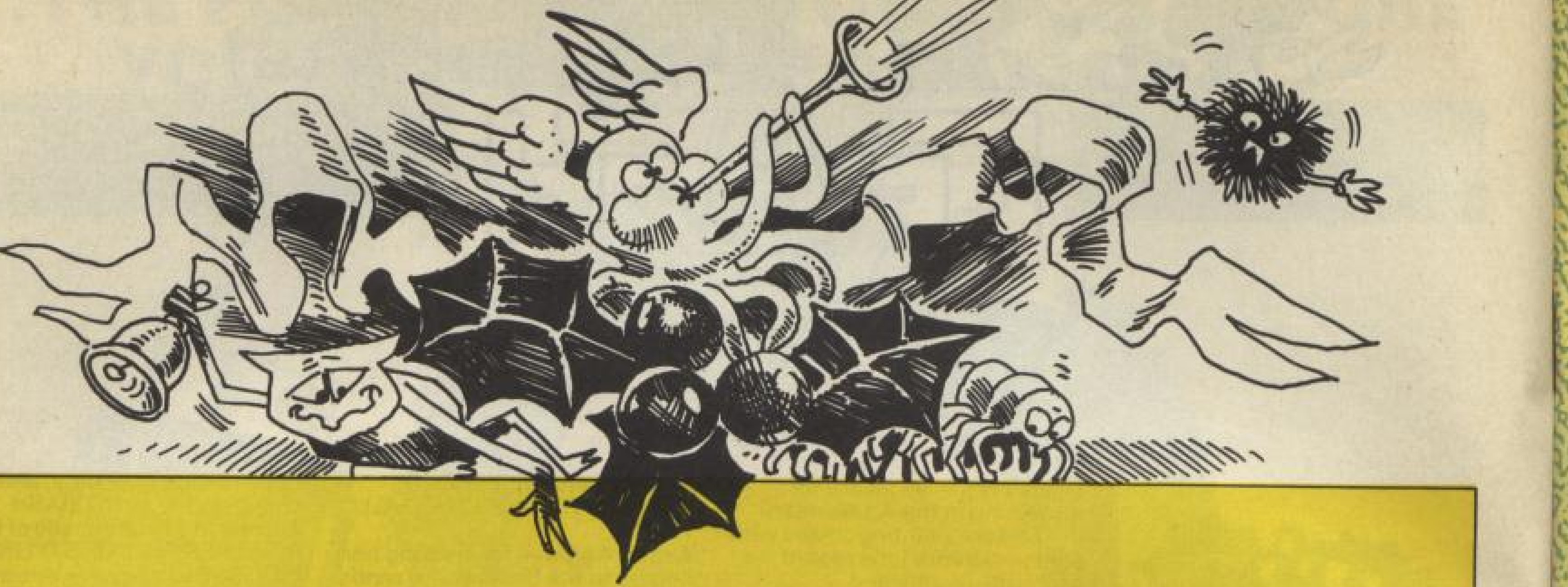
End of public service announcement. It's time to start work on the February issue. See you then ...

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CRASH - SINCLAIR USER

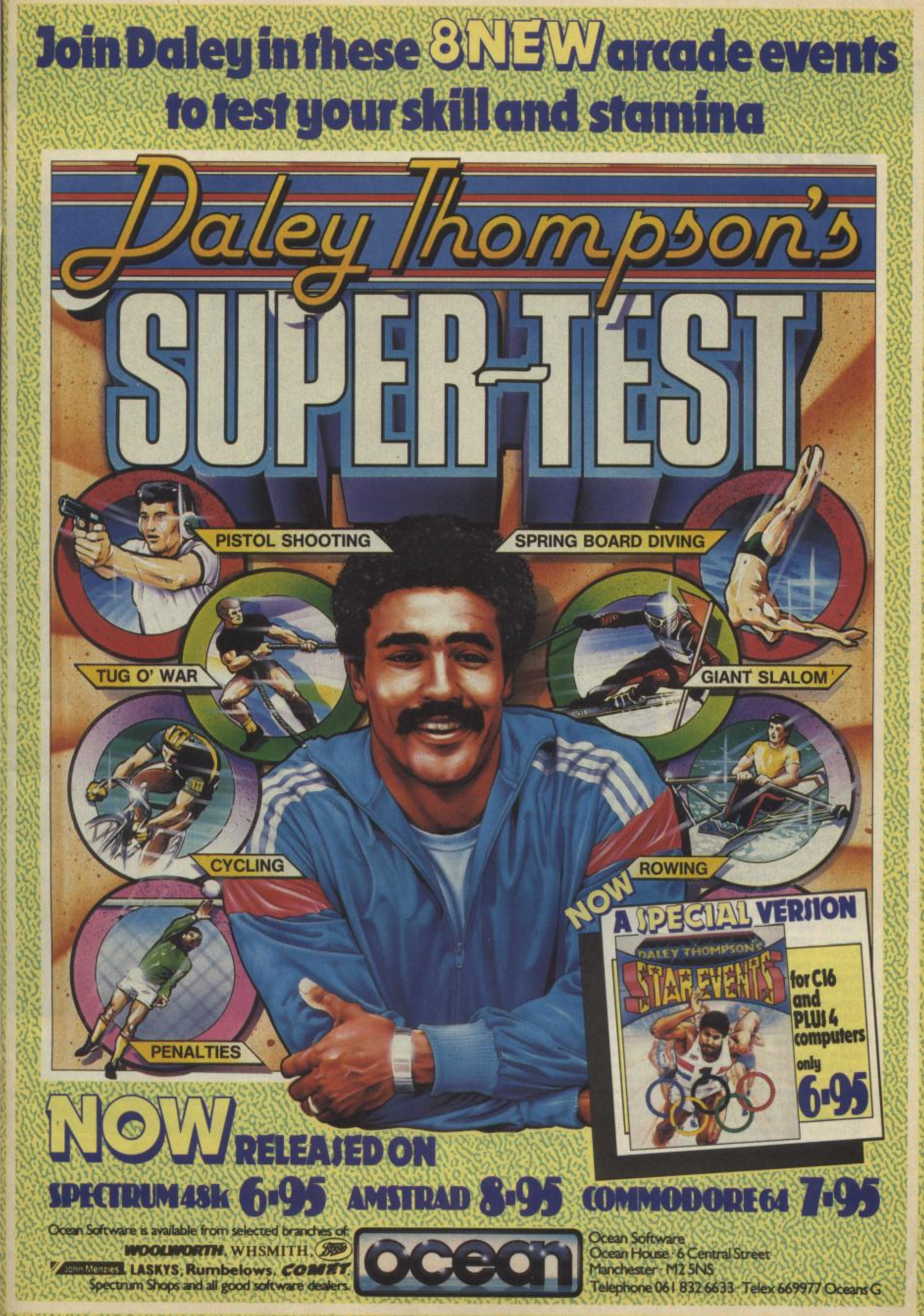
In the August issue of CRASH Magazine we printed a section which was intended as a spoof of *Sinclair User*.

We acknowledge that the contents of this section contained wholly unjustified allegations and inferences which adversely reflected on the integrity of *Sinclair User* and certain members of its editorial staff.

We wish unreservedly to apologise to *Sinclair User*, its publishers and editorial staff who we know from continued contact to be knowledgeable and professional journalists and highly respected in the home computer industry. We consider that *Sinclair User* is a magazine of the highest quality. We regret having given any indication to the contrary. We also fully accept that its dealings with the software industry should never have been called into question.

Finally, through our discussions with *Sinclair User*'s publishers, we can state without hesitation that both of our magazines wish to put our differences behind us and continue in friendly competition to serve the Sinclair computer market.

NEWSFIELD
GRAEME KIDD



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R•O•B•I•N O•F T

ROBIN OF THE WOOD

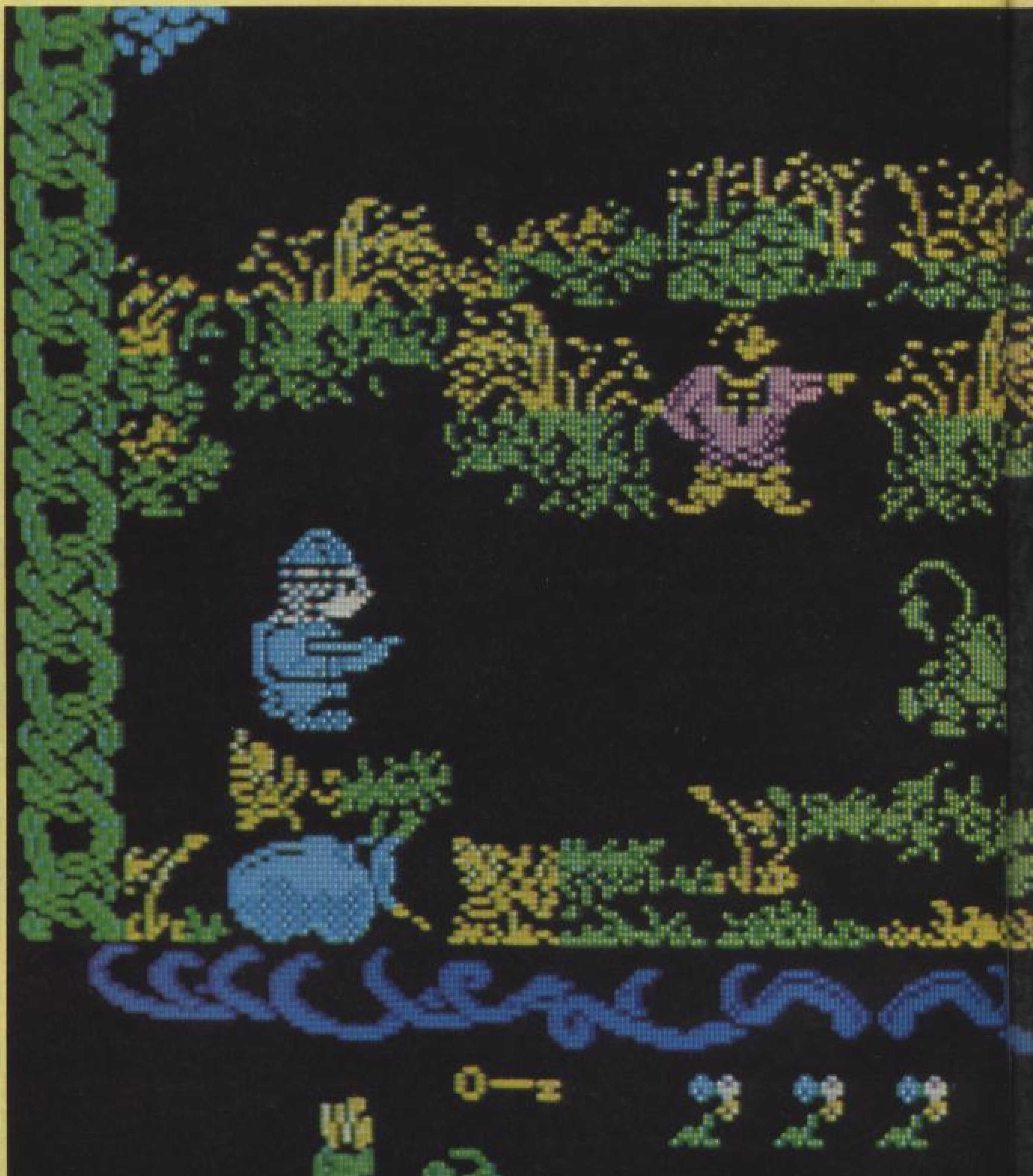
Producer: Odin Computer Graphics
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Odin team**

From a time outside history, before the language of the English was ever written down, there come to us stories and legends of heroes and valiant folk. One such story tells of Robin, son of Aleric, keeper of the Arrow. This silver arrow was a symbol of freedom and peace to the Saxon nation and it came into the Sheriff of Nottingham's possession after he arranged for Aleric's death. The arrow meant nothing to the Sheriff, and the years passed as the Normans continued to rob and exploit the Saxons.

Many years later, Aleric's son, Robin, became a thorn in the Sheriff's side. He had grown up and become the hero of the Saxon race, creating havoc by robbing the rich and giving to the poor. Realising the value of the Silver Arrow to the Saxons, the Sheriff announced that it would be the prize in an archery contest. Knowing that Robin would not be able to resist the challenge, the Sheriff sent his Norman knights out into the wood to hunt for Robin.

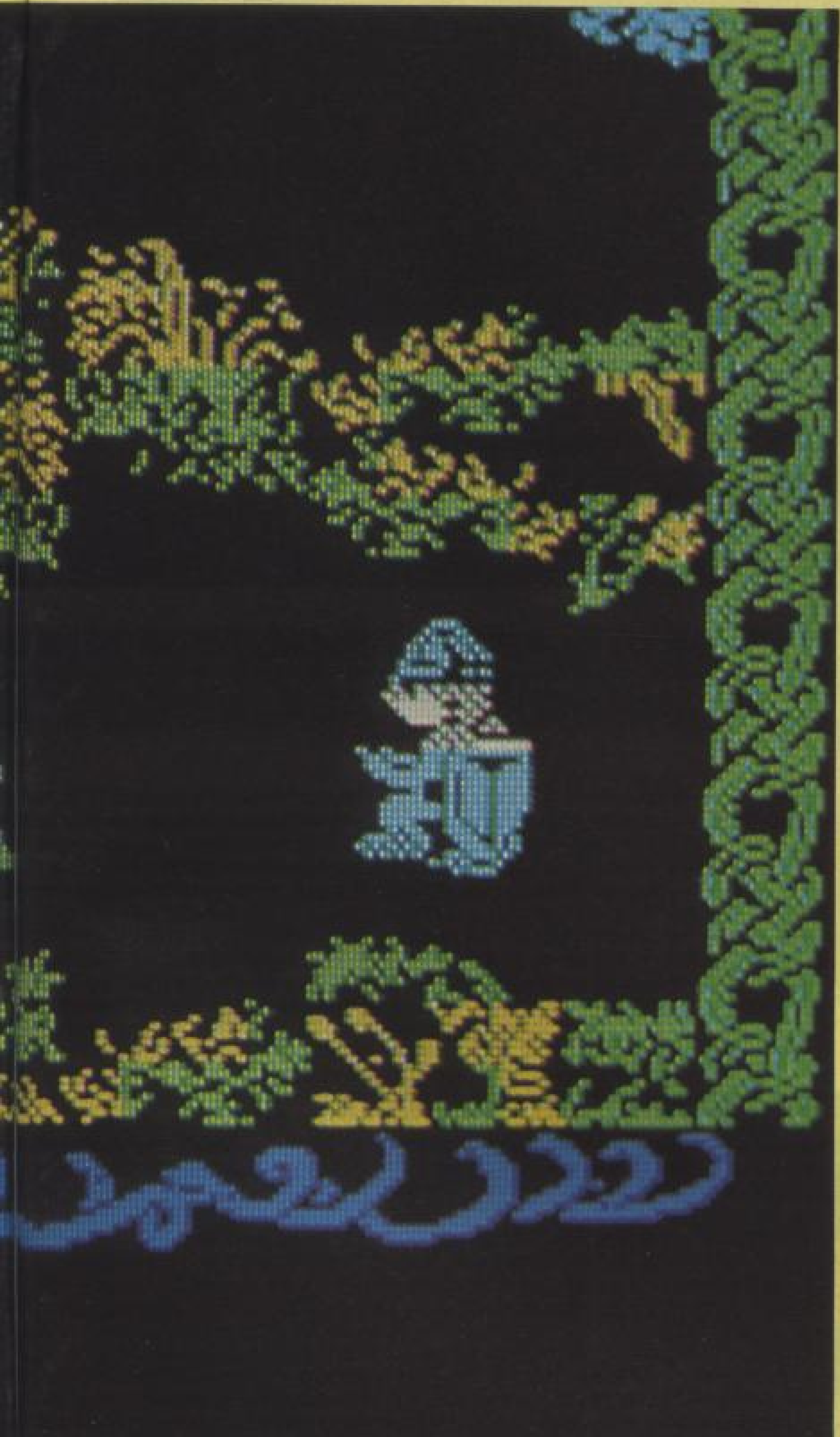
It is the day of the archery contest and you play the part of Robin. It is your mission to recover the arrow, The Shaft of Power, for the Saxon nation. Before making your way to the Sheriff's castle to enter the contest, you must first complete several other tasks in the forest. The old wise Ent (remember them from **Lord of the Rings**?) has in his keeping your bow, your sword and three magical arrows. In order to get these you must give the Ent three bags of gold for each weapon. The gold is in the possession of the Evil Bishop of Peterborough, who has an escort of crossbow-wielding Normans: some nifty fighting is needed before he can be robbed.

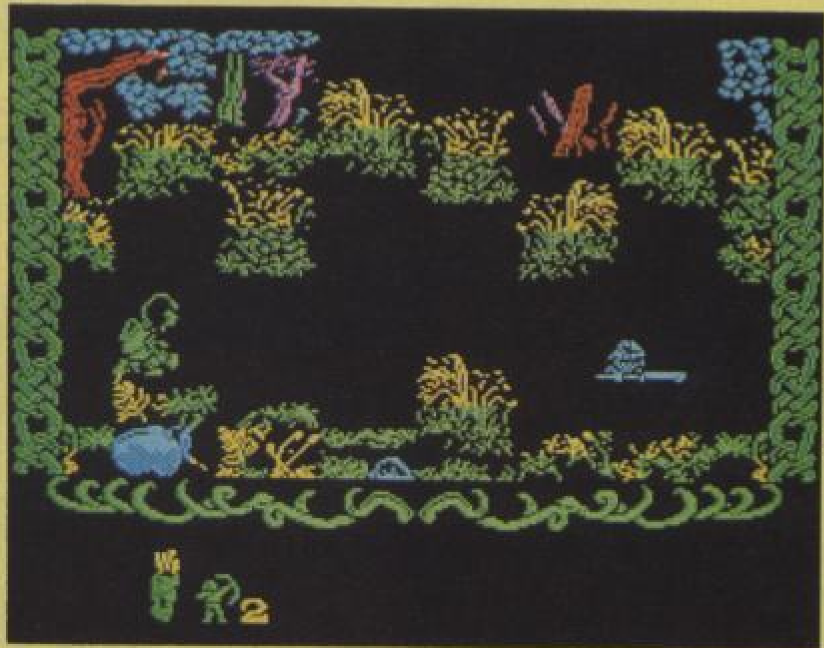
There are three areas in the game: the forest, the castle dungeons and the castle itself. The forest if a maze of leafy glades and tree-lined pathways through which the animated figure of Robin runs. Objects, including extra lives, flowers and arrows are scattered round the forest floor. All Robin has to do to pick them is is move over them and squat down. Apart from the marauding Norman soldiers who have orders to shoot on sight, and do their best to inflict wounds, there are other characters in the wood who will help or hinder you. While travelling to the castle you will encounter witches, who materialise from time to time. A witch will send you to the castle dungeon unless she's given the right amount of flowers. On the other hand, if a witch is given



Just when he was doing so well! Hemmed in by two nasty Normans, Robin is about to be banished to the castle dungeons by the nasty Sherrif who's just appeared. Robin's collected three flowers, a quiver full of arrows, two extra lives and a key. So he shouldn't have too much trouble escaping from the dungeon

T·H·E W·O·O·D





A forest scene, with Robin resting after having just done a Norman to death — the little blue helmet's all that's left . . .

flowers, she may help by transporting Robin to another location. A visit to the hermit doctor will pay dividends if you have been injured — but he isn't too nice if you're carrying weapons.

Boars run loose in the forest, and contact with a tusked terror leads to injuries. Occasionally you cross the path of the Sheriff of Nottingham, who has you imprisoned in his dungeons if he spots you. It is possible to escape from the dungeons, but not without a key!

Once you have got all the weapons and got into the castle you are able to enter the tournament and have a chance of winning the arrow. The three magical arrows purchased from the Ent will safeguard you against being recognised by the Sheriff, but once you have fired the last magic arrow you will be spotted, and must escape before getting caught.

Throughout the game your status is displayed at the bottom of the screen, together with the objects carried. Robin's health is represented by a pair of antlers which change colour according to his energy level. Naturally, if Robin's wounds become too severe, he dies, and care must be taken as you only have one life at the start of the game.

Just below the antlers the objects carried and extra lives obtained are displayed. Robin begins the game with a quarterstaff, which is perfectly adequate for despatching the Normans, but will only work in hand to hand combat. Other weapons can be used against the foe, and will come into action as appropriate, once you have bought them from the Ent.

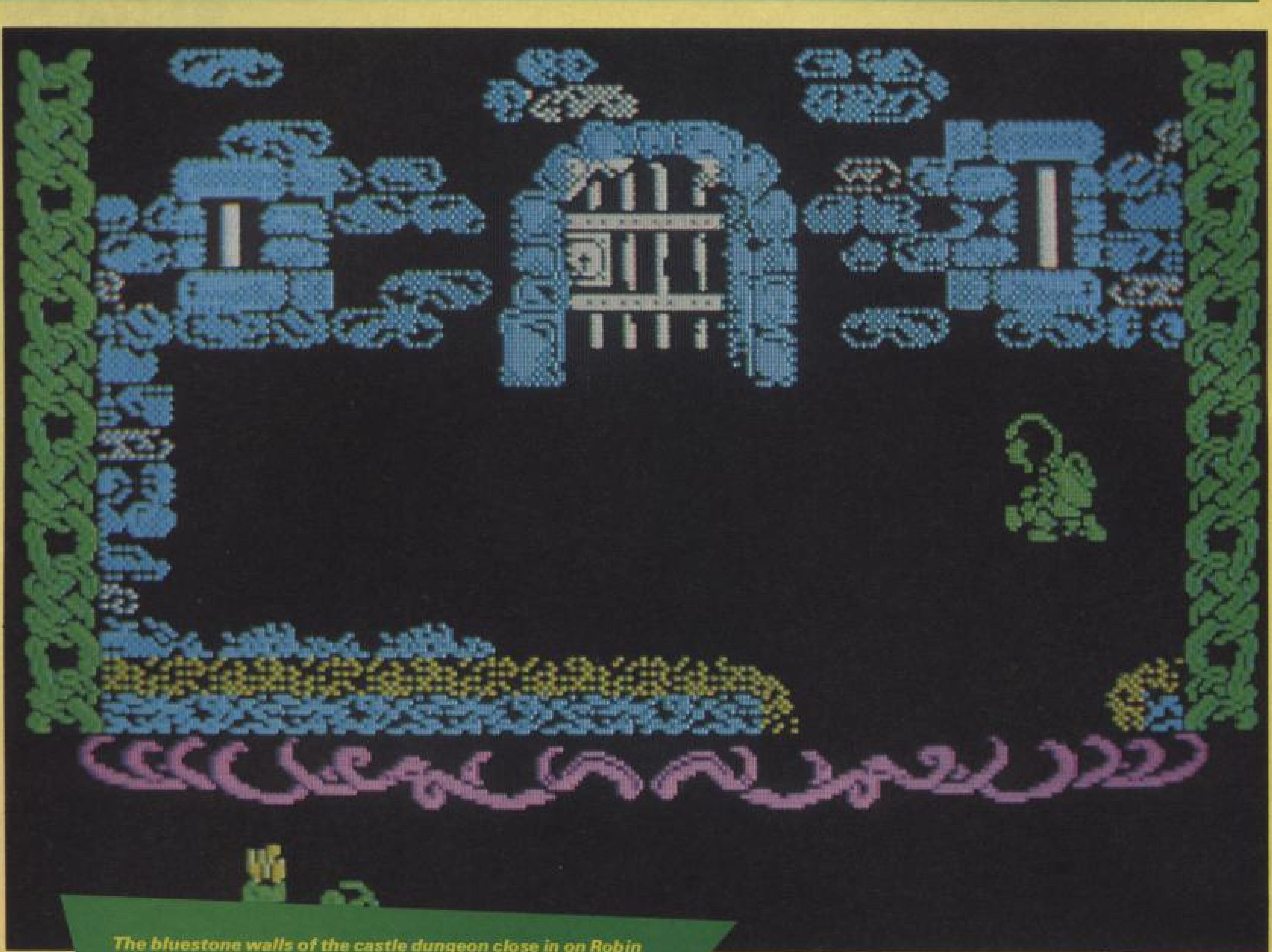
CRITICISM

● **'Odin's first release,** Nodes of Yesod, **was quite unexpected and proved to be an excellent game. Could they keep up the standards set by their previous game and produce the goods in** Robin of the Wood? **Thankfully, the answer is yes! Graphically this game is excellent, and the attention to detail is evident throughout. The programmers are obviously perfectionists. The high standard of the graphics has not been at the expense of colour: there are few attribute problems. Some cynics may say that the game looks like a** Sabre Wulf **variant, but it is much more involved, and character interaction plays an important part in** Robin of the Wood. **The animation is very well done — just watch Robin use his bow or attack a Norman with his trusty sword! The game makes quite a fun beat em up!** Robin of the Wood **is definitely another hit from the** Odin **stable. I can't wait for** The Arc of Yesod.'

● *'Everyone at CRASH Towers was eagerly awaiting Robin of the Wood. Then the finished copy arrived and was loaded up. 'Wow! What colour' I thought as Robin materialised on the screen. When everyone else had had their go, I finally got my hands on it. Robin's a great little character in the way he plods around the forest. After a few plays I realized that there was more behind the forest than first meets the eye. And it's a very colourful one — even with red and blue trees. You get a taste of the aggro to come when you go around hitting everyone in sight with your staff — which is great fun. After a while you get to hate witches. Every time I came across one I had no flowers and she she nicked my money bags. The Bishop and other characters are fantastically animated and when you get into the castle the colour used is amazing. This game is one of the most addictive I've played and I would recommend it to anyone.'*

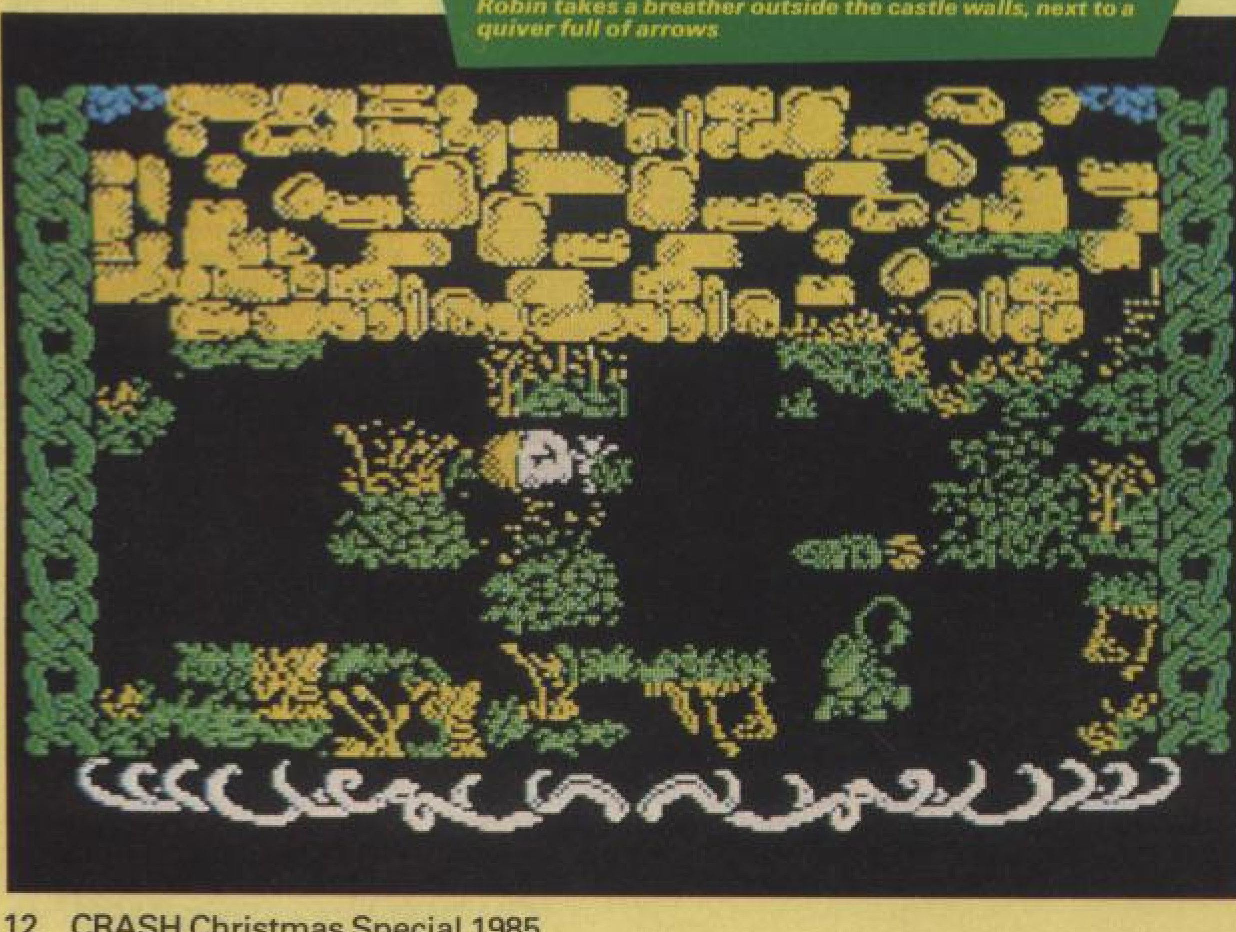
●'Though first impressions lead you believe *Robin of the Wood* is yet another *Sabre Wulf* clone, upon closer inspection it soon becomes apparent that a lot more thought and ingenuity has gone into its creation. The graphics are impeccable, animationally superior to nearly every other release on the Spectrum. The statics are very good too,

R•O•B•I•N O•F T•H•E W•O•O•D



The bluestone walls of the castle dungeon close in on Robin

Robin takes a breather outside the castle walls, next to a quiver full of arrows



giving a really woody atmosphere with realistically drawn flora and fauna. I thought the red boars were great, scuffling realistically across the screen. This is certainly a great step forward for Odin — it's even better than the excellent *Nodes of Yesod*.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Protek and Cursor types, Interface 2
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: excellent variety, with few attribute problems
Graphics: beautifully done, detailed and well executed
Sound: some recognisable speech plus a nice tune at the start of the game
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 330
General rating: an excellent game that should appeal to everyone

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	95%
Playability	96%
Getting started	88%
Addictive qualities	94%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**94%**

BEACH HEAD II

Producer: US Gold
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Platinum Productions**

After his numerous defeats in the pacific during World War II, the Allies' enemy,'The Dragon' has set himself up as an evil dictator commanding a squadron of crack troops who worship him as a Demigod. The man is a lunatic and a megalomaniac — something has to be done. Stryker, the Allies' most competent Commander leads an attack upon the crazed power monger's stronghold. To defeat him, a number of defences must be overcome so the evil warlord can be killed.

In the interests of variety, you can take on the role of either the Allies or the Dictator when playing a one-player game, or can battle it out in a two-player contest.

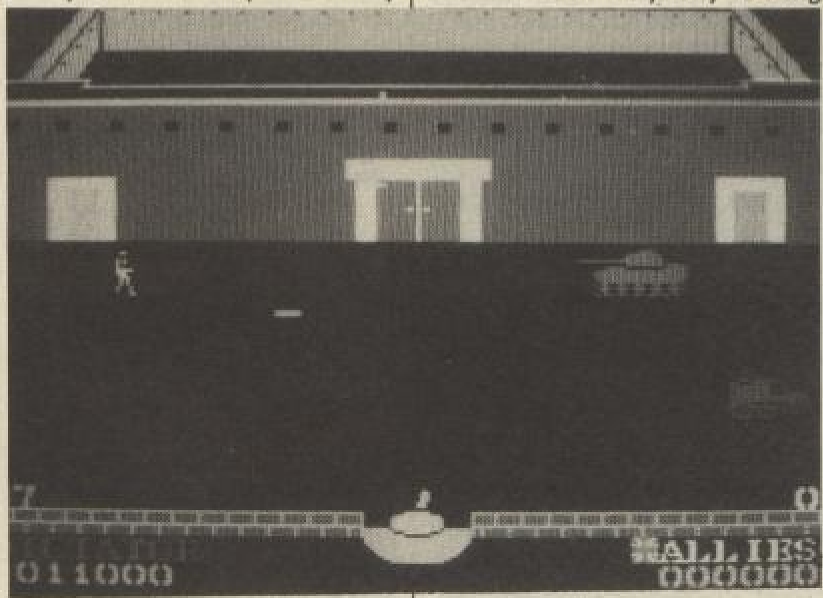
On the first screen, Allied troops have to be airdropped into the warzone from a helicopter. Fire drops a soldier, but if the helicopter's too low to allow the chute to open in time you get peopleburger all over the terrain. On landing, the soldiers make a dash for the nearest wall, trying to avoid fire from a machine gun manned by one of the Dragon's stooges. The machine gunner is hampered by the fact that it takes time for him to react and turn the gun to point at the helpless troops. Once all the men are safely hiding behind the walls at the top they have to make their way to the bottom of the screen, avoiding the manic machine gunner's eagle eye.

The edges of the walls flash in a cycle along the length of the line. Pressing fire brings a man out, and he's controlled by the joystick as he runs down to the next section of wall. From the third wall, nearest the gun emplacement, the troops have to be manoeuvered to the bottom of the screen. The control method is the same, except pressing fire when controlling a man allows a grenade to be lobbed in the hope of totalling the pill box. Pressing fire twice when you select a wall sends down a computer controlled soldier — handy if a decoy is needed to draw fire.

On the second screen, hostages must be protected as they run the gauntlet against the Dragon's troops. Running short of ammo the enemy are desperate and throw just about anything at the fleeing captives. The allies have captured a gun that is used against the four different hazards that the escaping prisoner can easily fall foul of: a soldier drops stones from the top of the wall the hostages have to walk beneath; a tank trundles on from the right and will happily squash anyone in its path; an armoured car drives from the left, firing a small calibre machine gun mounted inside and finally, enemy soldiers dump mines, popping out of trap doors to lay them. All these obstacles can be shot up, but accurate shooting is needed. If you shoot a hostage by mistake he doesn't get wounded, but just pauses for a while before moving on.

The penultimate scene is your chance to ferry the hostages to safety in four helicopters that fly over a vertically scrolling landscape. Tanks and lookout posts placed upon the terrain at inconvenient locations hurl shells at the helicopters, making life tricky for the pilot. The difficulty of the terrain is decided by the Dragon before the section starts. Once the four helicopters are through, Commander Stryker finally gets to meet his arch enemy, the Dragon, in mortal combat.

The two opponents stand opposite each other on parallel platforms on either side of a river. The idea is to hit the other man with poonta sticks until he falls into the water. Poontas are small, sharp pointed sticks, made especially for throwing. Each time a combatant it hit three times, he takes a topple and there are five rounds to be battled out before the contest is decided.



CRITICISM

● **'Wargames aren't really my cup of tea to be honest — I'm not one for mindless violence. Looking at** Beach-Head **as only a game, it's not that bad — an awful lot of program has been squeezed into a 48K Spectrum for just one load. The only trouble is that it's a bit easy to complete and once completed the only incentive to play again is too get a high score. The twc player game is quite fun, however, and there are lots of ways you can play the game — no shortage of options here. The graphics, though a bit crude, work quite well. The end sequence is ridiculously easy once you've figured that your opponent won't move till you do. If you liked** Beach Head **then you'll like** Beach-Head II.

● *'Another sizzling American game hits the Spectrum, the only trouble is that American games and Spectrums don't seem to mix very well. Quite a lot of the games which have made their way across the Atlantic (usually CBM 64) have fabulous graphics and sound which mask a pretty boring game —* Beach Head II *is one such game. On the Commodore it was great with its speech, amazing animation and smooth graphics, but these have been lost in the transition from 64 to Spectrum leaving a pretty simple and boring game. If gunning down loads of men really is your cup o' tea then fine, take a look at this. If it's not then try something a little more intellectually stimulating'.*

● 'At last! US Gold kept us waiting for more than a year for



the follow-up to their Mega-Seller *Beach Head*. It's well worth the wait, though. Four screens, each in its own right a separate arcade game, make this much better than the last. I suppose most people will buy it because of the original, but as it stands it's a great game. The graphics in all stages are good, as is the playability. (My personal favourite of the four is Screen Three.) You really get your money's worth, give the variation in the game, so I suppose *Beach Head II* will be found in Christmas stockings up and down the land.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: some attribute clash, nothing remarkable
Graphics: some good animation
Sound: a tune, and some effects
Skill levels: 3
Screens: four
General rating: A lot of options crammed into one game; some may find the gameplay weak

Use of computer	**85%**
Graphics	**79%**
Playability	**81%**
Getting started	**75%**
Addictive qualities	**75%**
Value for money	**71%**
Overall	**74%**

PANZA-DROME

Producer: Ariolasoft
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **RamJam Corporation**

The *Panzadrome* is an island inhabited by robot tanks of varying levels of viciousness. The mission that's been foisted upon you is to destroy the Panzadrome. Each tank is remotely controlled from a central computer, from which it gets its power. This central computer is powered by a geothermal based energy source. Plasma vents are a central part of the power grid, and they have to be destroyed in order to knock out the computer. The computer is well aware of this weakness, and wherever you find a vent there is also a very hefty guardian force as well. Apart from the tanks, you have to reckon with heavily armed gun emplacements, which spit death at any unknown passer by. You are un known, so beware.

When you start, the tank that's allocated to you can't really be described as top notch. In fact it's positively sub standard, with a one-shot turret and stone wheels! Fortunately, factory depots are scattered around the island, each specialising in a different type of tank component. Originally placed there to make and repair the robotanks, it's possible for you to sneak in and collect whatever weapon system a factory makes.

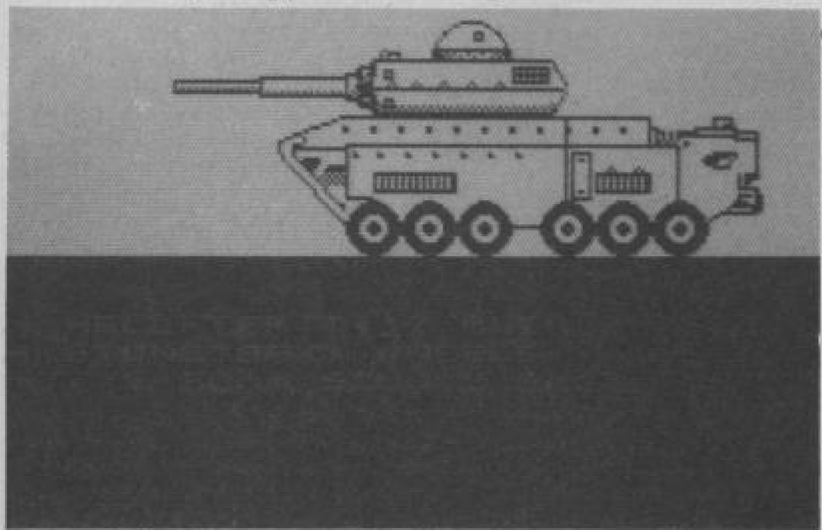
Though the robot part stores

are not wise to your little suicide mission, and merrily upgrade your tank, the computer run tanks are well aware, and will do their best to blow you away. Three different types of weapon are available to you, though only one is supplied when you power up — a single shot turret cannon. Mortars and mines are definitely worth having, but they have to be collected from the appropriate factory.

A PolycreteTM module is well worth collecting. While it's possible to avoid the fire from the enemy tanks by moving quickly, both their shells and yours leave impassable craters in the ground if they hit the deck. With tanks constantly taking potshots at you it is quite easy to get permanently stuck between a couple of impassable craters. The polycrete module is like having Taylor Woodrow in the back of your tank. The P key lets forth a jet of a cement-like substance that fills in craters beautifully.

The Panzadrome itself is a 64-screen island — each screen flicks to the next when the edge boundary is reached. A scanner, consisting of an eight by eight grid, helps you navigate by highlighting the screen you are currently occupying. A short range scanner covers the screen you're on, showing the tanks, which you can see, and the mines, which you can't. Also shown on the status screen is the state of repair of any equipment you may have. If your tank takes too much punishment you can lose the use of peripheral equipment. Only one life is supplied, and if your shields run out a direct hit on your tank ends the game. Status bars depict shield level, plus other handy information like stock counts on the amount of mortars and mines left in your possession.

As you progress through the game and manage to total a few plasma vents, the enemy slowly gets aware of your designs, and the tanks and defences get more vicious still.



CRITICISM

● **'I'm not overkeen on military type games, but** Panzadrome **was a pleasant surprise. It's pretty good fun just as a hack round and blast the tanks game, but you soon realise that there's also a greater strategic depth within it. I like the idea of the game a great deal but I do feel it could have been a bit more competently executed. The movement of the tanks slows down horrendously once there's more than a few of them on screen, making retaliation near impossible. The graphics are very pretty and are nicely presented, though the actual tank sprite would not have suffered if it had been a bit larger.** Panzadrome **should appeal to quite a few people, though I found it a bit dull after a while because of it's sporadic slowness. Worth checking out though.'**

● *'Being temporarily joystickless when I reviewed this one at home, I found this game more difficult than it should have been because all the control keys were in the same row — I thought software houses gave that years ago! I've not no major grouches about* Panzadrome*: essentially it's a good game but it's spoilt a bit by a few things that wouldn't be difficult to alter. The graphics, with the exception of the rather too small tanks, are superlative, even casting shadows on the streets. The most aggravating aspect of the game, for me, was getting stuck in a narrow street between two craters when I hadn't got any Polycrete TM, leaving me no option but to restart. Generally, a very good piece of software, but not quite good enough for me to rave over.'*

● 'I liked *Panzadrome*. It's not a classic game, but the graphics are interesting and the gameplay is a bit different. You've got a large playing area to explore, and plenty of things to shoot at (and avoid). The tank graphics are perhaps a little crude, and things tend to slow down a bit when the screen's full, making your tank a bit sluggish when it come to responding to orders. At times the game is really wicked — if you don't watch out it's easy to get trapped, and a fair bit of strategy is involved in playing successfully. When you get the top-of-the-range tank, though, all the effort is worthwhile!'

COMMENTS

Control keys: CAPS LOCK/Z rotate left and right X/C forwards/backwards, V to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: some people will find the key layout awkward
Use of colour: attractive scenario that's prettily presented
Graphics: blocky, but nicely detailed producing a good effect
Sound: neat rendition of Beethoven's 9th at start but nearly non existent after that
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 64
General rating: A very good idea that is let down a bit by the execution

Use of computer	65%
Graphics	80%
Playability	72%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	69%
Overall	**77%**

ENDURANCE

Producer: CRL
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **G Munday and B Wheelhouse**

Endurance allows you to participate in Formula One motorbike racing without risk to life, limb or wallet. Avoiding any kind of arcade action, *Endurance* puts you in the position of team manager — rather like *Football Manager* of the racetracks really.

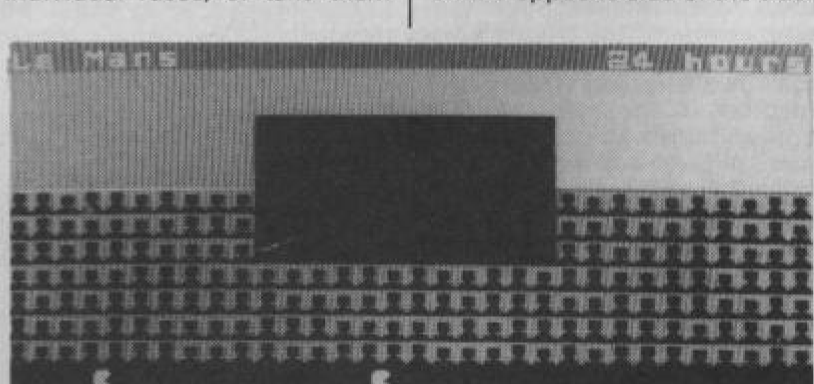
The racing team in your charge consists of two bikes and four riders, and you have to juggle with a variety of variables while your try to make your team successful. Pitstop skills are well worth practising, as keeping the bikes in good order is as important as your riders' racing skills. In the pits you can swap riders or service a bike ... Several things can go wrong with a bike: brake pads can wear, tyres can burst, fuel can run out and engines go out of tune.

You can choose to compete in individual races, or take them together as a world competition. When a rider wins, points are given to both the team and the rider as an individual. Four of the six races are fairly short, while two tracks are twenty four hour races, and take around an hour to complete in real time.

Up to six players are allowed to take part in one game, and five skill levels are available. Selections are made with the joystick controlling a pointer, using fire to select options. There's a choice of riders and bikes, and once chosen they can be renamed to make things a bit more personal. Then chassis and bike specification of each vehicle needs to be set in the pits by a mechanic. The first thing to do is tune the engine. Below the bike are three bar graphs, one for safety, one for power and another for miles per gallon. Using the arrow selector each rating can be boosted to fit your requirements. Strategy comes into play here, as an increase in one factor causes a decease in the other two.

The handling of the bike then has to be set in a similar manner, but this time the different factors are speed, safety and wear. Tyre selection allows soft, medium or hard compound tyres to be fitted to the back and front wheels. Lastly, the team member to ride first is chosen.

Before a race the riders line up on the opposite side of the track



to their bikes, then the starter drops the flag and the riders leap onto their machines. Each lap is computer controlled and you see a view from the grandstand, watching the bikes whizz past. After every lap the positions of the bikes in the race is updated. The main scoreboard displays the first six places, showing the leader and the distance each of the next five riders is behind him. Along a smaller board above the main track the numbers of the first sixteen racers are shown. If any of the bikes on the course are having problems, then their numbers are highlighted in red.

Instructions can be issued to your riders on the completion of every lap by pressing the I key. In all, there are three options: Go Go Go, Ride normally, and Take it easy. If the fuel on one of your bikes runs out or a fault gets too bad to cope with, then an automatic pit stop is called by the computer.

When in the pits, you control a mechanic. By moving him along the body of the bike various options appear for the maintenance of the bike. The engine can be tuned, the wheels can be changed and the brakes can be repaired. These sections are operated in the same way as the start up screens, using histograms and pointers. Fuel can also be replenished and the riders can be changed — a rider's energy rating goes down, the longer he races.

When the bike has been returned to spick and span condition it returns to the track. The time for your pitcall is displayed and if you spent too long in the pits, then you can opt to quit the race.

CRITICISM

● **'Though initially seeming very tedious, badly programmed and on the whole, totally inept, I found that this game has a spark of addictivity once I gave it a go. It really brings out an urge to win in me. I don't know why, but even with the peeping and parping sounds and absolutely prehistoric graphics, I actually enjoyed** Endurance. **Real bike fans will probably enjoy the game even more. I wouldn't recommend anyone to run out and buy a copy now, now, now — but it's definitely worth taking a look at.'**

● *'A game that allows me to strip a bike down without getting oil all over me mum's kitchen floor — great! The sound would be awful, if there was enough to be noticed and the graphics are poor and annoyingly slow, especially when in the pits. All the same, I found it difficult to stop playing this strategy game. As an arcade game it's a non starter but treated as a strategy game with the graphics and sound added to use up the spare memory, it's very addictive. I like it, and I'm going to play it until I win! So there.'*

● 'Very much one for the sports management simulation fans — one of the best since *Football Manager*, and in many ways it's really quite similar. The tension it creates is quite fabulous. During one game, a championship, I was just 6 minutes from the end of the Le Mans 24 hour race when guess what? The power went off! I went nutty. The only thing against this game is the graphics — they're terrible. I really enjoyed this one, all the same. The five skill levels, the wide range of tracks and the choice of championship or single races mean this game will last a long time. If you liked *Football Manager* for the strategic elements, you'll love *Endurance*.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: no problems
Use of colour: poor
Graphics: simplistic to the point of crudity
Sound: quite a lot, but all very similar
Skill levels: 5
Screens: menus, the pits and grandstand view
General rating: Though not stunning in any way at all, it has a certain something



Use of computer	**39%**
Graphics	**32%**
Playability	**67%**
Getting started	**69%**
Addictive qualities	**74%**
Value for money	**67%**
Overall	**69%**

ROCK MAN

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **Machine Code**
Author: **Dean Carter, the smiling assassin**



Rockman is an underevolved little Troglodyte whose main motivation in life is food. Rockman knows what he likes and his favourite food is Mushrooms in huge quantities. The mushrooms proliferate throughout the network of caves that Rockman lives in — a pretty idyllic lifestyle, all things considered, except for the smiling faces. Though of a jolly grimace these vaugely intelligent sprites spell death for Trog if they touch him. After all, smiling faces have to eat too, and they don't like mushrooms so Troglidytes have to do as munchies for the faces.

Though he lives in the stone age, Rockman does possess some form of primitive technology. He has a hammer. Bashing any of the rocks with his mallet causes it to instantly crumble or fall to the floor, depending on what was beneath it. If Troglidyte eats all the Mushrooms on one screen then he's instantly transported onto the next screen where another feast of mushrooms is laid before him, which he just has to eat.

Rockman's on-screen antics are represented as a side on 2D view. With spritely vigour he can run along, and drop off, the ledges of rocks that make up the majority of the maze. Also making a part of the caves interior are the vertical red zoom tubes which allow him to scamper up an down between levels. The mushrooms are large red fungi, and it's hard to see how Rockman fits them inside his mouth — still, he gobbles them up as he runs over them.

Also part of the scenery are the totally inert marble ledges. They don't do a lot and there's not a lot you can do to them. These are usually placed around as barriers or ledges. Another component of the caves are the inanimate skulls, sitting innocently until Rockman is foolish enough to hop onto one, whereupon it's a case of instant dismissal.

The blocks of rock in the cave crumble beneath a mighty blow from a prehistoric hammer, unless the space below is empty, in which case the rock falls harmlessly to the next layer. The hammer works by pressing fire and if a block of rock is sitting in the direction Rockman is facing, he'll give a mighty swing and bring the hammer down. If a smiling face is below a rock when it falls to the floor, Rockman gets his revenge — it's splatted to oblivion. Two smiling faces wander the caverns and if one is killed, another materialises to take its place. The faces roam semi randomly but they do have a slight tendency to follow Rockman, a factor that can be used to Rockman's advantage on the later screens when they have to be lured in the direction you want.

Though some people like to take time over their lunch, Rockman doesn't, and actually needs to consume all the mushrooms present on a screen within a time limit. If he's a good boy and eats them all up, bonus points are awarded according to how much time is left.

Upon starting a game you are asked for a password, or to press space. If you've previously completed five screens then a password will be known to you and it's possible to start from where you left off. Fives lives are given for Rockman to stuff himself silly, one being lost for every ill encounter with a cave nasty. Not eating lunch in the time given also incurs a nasty loss of life. Ho hum, just like Crash Towers at dinner time.

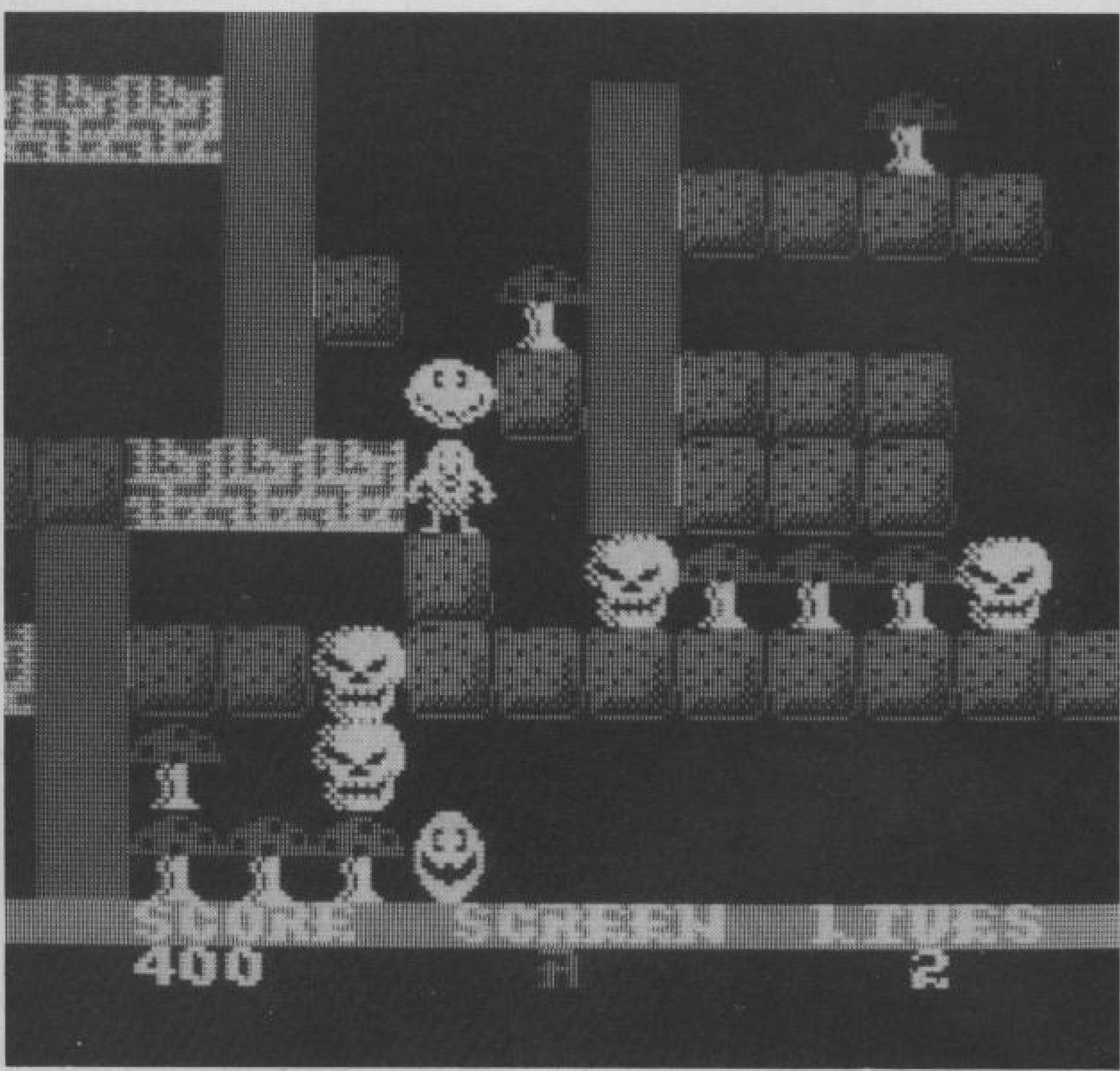
CRITICISM

● 'Rockman **is yet another budget program from Mastertronic that impressed the hell out of me. Though lacking amazing graphics and state of**

the art programming, Rockman **is very playable indeed. There are enough screens to hold interest for a fair amount of time and the codeword system means there's no need to play the same old screens again and again. Rockman himself moves at an adequate pace and is very responsive indeed. Some of the bigger firms should really take a good hard look at some of Mastertronic's latest product as it really puts some of the latest megagames to shame.'**

● *'This one seems to be very similar to a ruck of games we had in around issue 9, Hyperaction etc, and Rockman is about the average for that type of game — although it is a little out of date now. Graphically, this offers nothing new: the characters flicker too much and the colour is garish. I quite enjoyed playing this one for a while but found I got bored with it very quickly.'*

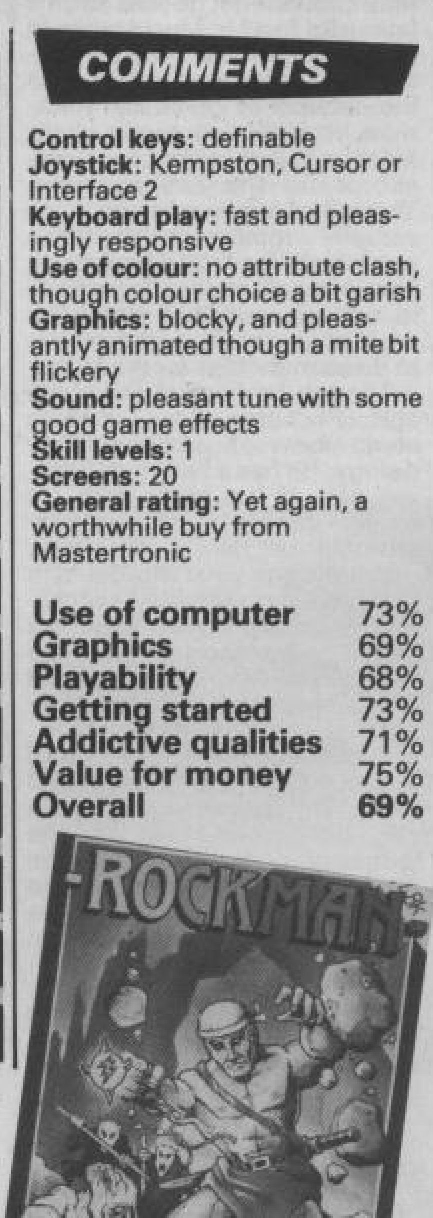
● 'What a jolly little game! Lots of cute colourful graphics, that do flicker, but look good all the same. For 1.99, what we have is a nice platform game, that brings the old lateral thinking skills into play again. Some parts are rather amateurishly programmed, but all the same it's entertaining, and once you've bought all the really good progs you might be tempted to have a look at this; it's in no way shockingly good, but after all you can't expect perfection every time for 1.99.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor or Interface 2
Keyboard play: fast and pleasingly responsive
Use of colour: no attribute clash, though colour choice a bit garish
Graphics: blocky, and pleasantly animated though a mite bit flickery
Sound: pleasant tune with some good game effects
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 20
General rating: Yet again, a worthwhile buy from Mastertronic

Use of computer	73%
Graphics	69%
Playability	68%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	71%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**69%**



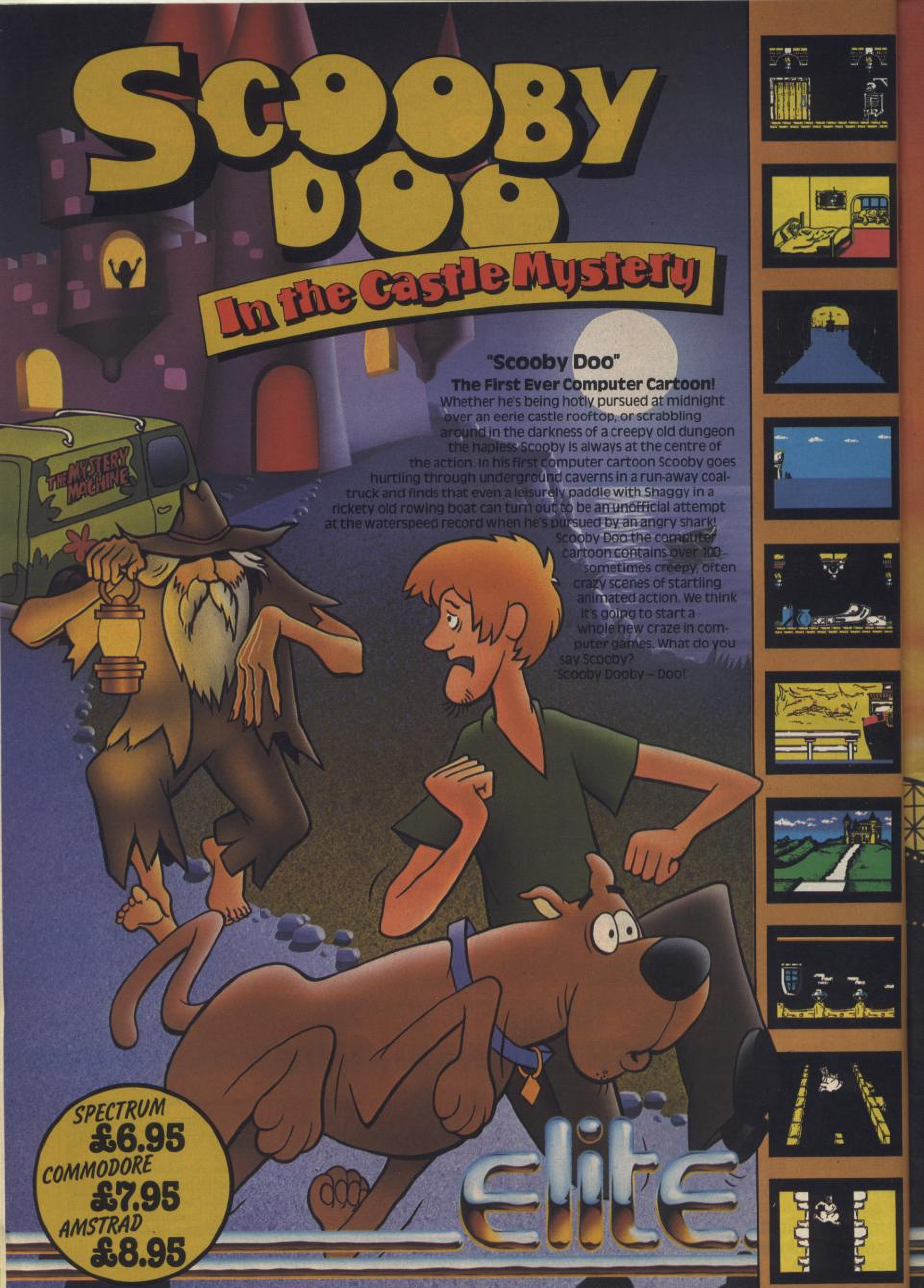
ROBOT MESSIAH

Producer: Alphabatim
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mike Smith and Christian Urqhart**

The Android planet is one of the worst places to live if you happen to be a robot. The planet is ruled and dominated by a race of androids who, in a fit of synthesised evolution, managed to acquire the majority of human feelings and attributes such as ambition, determination and greed.

Thousands of robots working in the planet's mines are exploited by the Androids. Leading a hellish existence, the robots' life spans are very short and unpleasant. The robots are purposely made to be of a docile nature and are too weak to contemplate rebellion. SID is a freak though. He is not as servile as his metallic brothers. One day, in the hope of escaping his grim fate, he wanders away from the mines into the deep cave net-


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PING PONG



Imagine Software (1984), 6 Central Street
Manchester M2 5NS. Tel: 061-834 3939. Telex: 669977

*You can almost feel the tension of the big match breaking through the screen . . . the expectant crowd is almost on top of you! You return the service with a **Top-spin Backhand,** then a **Forehand Back-spin,** the ball bounces high from your opponent's looping, defensive lob . . . **SMASH!** . . . a great shot opens the score . . . but this is only your first point! Play head to head or against the computer in this, Konami's first and best table-tennis simulation.*

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ROBOT MESSIAH the one hope for the Droids!

work that weaves endlessly below the plantetoid's surface.

Frightened of being discovered by the evil gnome patrols that keep the workers in step, SID eventually found a cold and particularly well-hidden cave. Socrates, a philosopher from among the ruling robots who had preached the unpopular view that all machines were created equal was hiding in this cave. For his beliefs, Socrates had been exiled.

Realising that SID might be able to liberate the robots and become their Messiah, Socrates instructs him: to achieve upgrade and become an Android in order to lead the worker robots to rebellion, SID must collect three envelopes, each containing one part of a computer program. The complete program must then be input to the Android's main computer. SID agrees to the philosopher's requests and sets off on his mission to liberate robotkind.

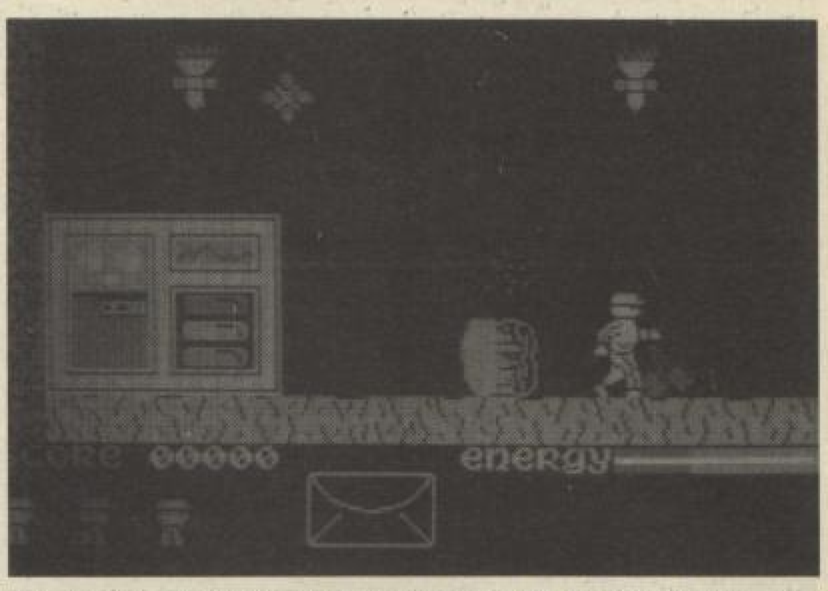
SID is a quite normal robot capable of quite a few useful tasks. For a start he can walk, and when it comes to getting over obstacles that block his way, a hefty robotic leap allows him to pass any barrier. The cave system is shown in a rather similar way to many adventures that have run before it, using the familiar flick screen method. Many harmful objects and creatures are to be found underground. Water isn't very healthy when your prime constituent is iron, for instance . . .

There are some useful things to be found, too. Advanced high protein energy reboosters perk up your energy bar — they come in the form of sticky buns and bits of fruit. As an energy based organism your energy bar gives a direct indication of how much life you have left. Three energy bars are given on your quest for robot liberation: lose them and the game ends and your brothers are condemned to eternal slavery.

To get the three envelopes, three sections of the labyrinthe must be negotiated, starting with the caves. To leave the caves a weight must be found to place upon a pressure pad to allow entry to the next section. Moving SID over an object and pressing the pick up key adds objects to your status line — only three objects can be carried at once.

You aren't the only inhabitant of the caves. Strange energy-sapping beings float around, and finding a gun is a good move — though you'll need to collect a magazine of bullets as well before you can start blasting away. Twelve bullet magazines of ammo are dotted round the caves.

Once through to the second section SID finds himself in a buggy travelling down a long corridor towards the next part. The buggy is equipped with a shield that can be activated if any cave creatures drift towards it, though the shield saps energy. A scanner at the top of the screen shows how far away the test centre is. Once through the corridor you're plonked within another room with a pressure pad. The only way out is through the door that the pad activates — without a weight you've got problems!



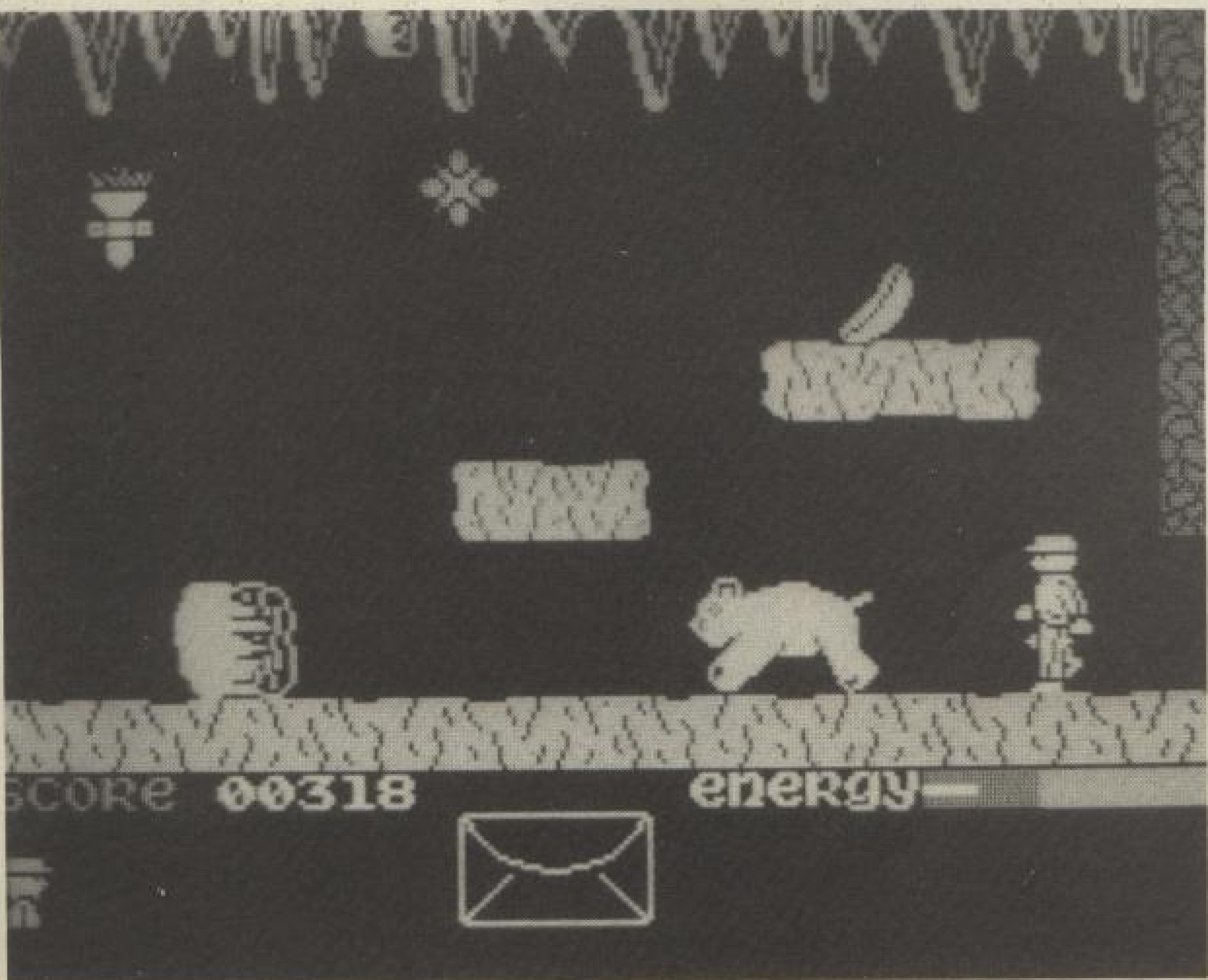
If you do get out of the room then SID is placed into the test centre. Here the envelopes must be found and the teleport activated to zap SID back into the first set of caves so the computer can be reprogrammed.

CRITICISM

● **'After a glut of similar programs I must admit to being a little bemused by Alphabatim's decision to release something so derivative as their launch game. As an arcade adventure,** Robot Messiah **contains problems that are both logical and fun to solve, and the game compares well with the opposition. Things can slow down a bit when quite a few objects are on screen, and the action can get a bit ploddy at times. Graphically the game isn't all that exceptional — it's adequate apart from the animation on SID which is excellent. Overall not a bad game though there are so many of this sort already on the market and some are better:** Robot Messiah **may well be worth a look at if arcade adventures are your type of game.'**

● 'Robot Messiah *looked like it was really going to be something special, but unfortunately I found it rather boring and repetitive to play. The main character walks around really slowly, transforming any initial adventuring excitement into extreme frustration because it seems to take so long to get anywhere. The scenery is also pretty dull and samey making the game seem like a poor man's* Nodes of Yesod. *I do like a good arcade adventure, but this one failed to spark any real enthusiasm — when I played it I had a constant feeling of deja vu'.*

● '*Robot Messiah*, Alphabatim's entry into the software jungle reminded me a bit too much of the fabulous *Nodes of Yesod*, The game itself is very colourful and the movement is very smooth with lots of well animated baddies. The sound effects contain too much clicking — a good constant tune would have been better. The accuracy of the blocks is appalling: it's possible to stand at least a character space over the edge of a platform in mid air without falling to the ground. At first look a pleasing game, but after a few games you notice lots of problems with it.

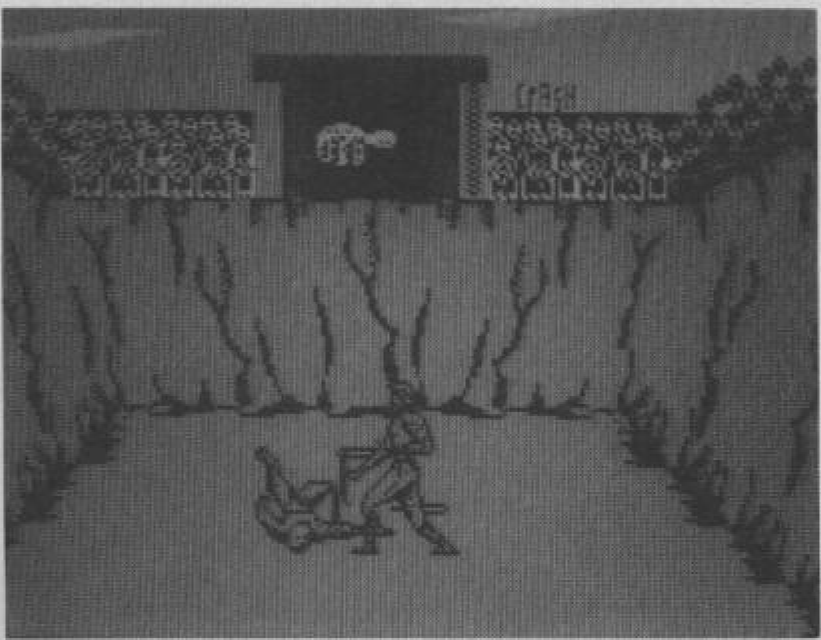


COMMENTS

Control keys: N left, M right, S leap, A fire, X pick up

Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responds adequately
Use of colour: pretty, no attribute clash
Graphics: good animation, nice graphics but a bit repetitive
Sound: not a great deal
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 152
General rating: A passable arcade adventure, but nothing particularly special

Use of computer	**80%**
Graphics	**76%**
Playability	**71%**
Getting started	**68%**
Addictive qualities	**69%**
Value for money	**70%**
Overall	**72%**



GLADIATOR

Producer: Domark
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mike Green**

Beat 'em up's look like they're here to stay. Domark have just released one by the name of *Gladiator.* No prizes for guessing the what the scenario for this one is . . .

As a slave, Marcus was none too happy. Tired with a life of toil among the Roman fields, Marcus decides to try and battle for his freedom among the gladiators in the stadia of Rome. To buy his freedom, Marcus must win 180 times 180 eagles, a very high price indeed.

To get so much money you'll have to vanquish up to seventeen fighters and then take part in a gambling session, betting on the outcome of a two fighter fight. As you win fights, you are matched against more skillful opponents who come into the arena with better weapons. Both Marcus and his opponents are capable of twenty five different moves, ranging from offensive to defensive and during combat the idea is to reduce Marcus' opponent's energy supply, which is indicated by a bar graph on the side of the emperor's box. Bash your opponent a bit, and his energy reading falls depending on the weapon he's been hit with and where he's been hit. Marcus has an energy bar and that's also prone to depletion from the attacker's advances. If the energy bar fills up, a big thumb looms out of the royal box and gives the thumbs down sign.

A weapon selection screen pops into view at the start of each contest, containing forty five different weapons, each with its own power and defence rating — though the program doesn't tell you what they are. Arming Marcus is a process of trial and error to begin with and deciding which weapon is best plays quite an important part in the game. Marcus can use a weapon in each hand as well a a set of wrist knives.

After choosing the weapons, the gladiators move the to arena, where the action is viewed by the player from a spectator's eye view on the edge of the arena. The arena is three dimensional: the gladiators can move in and out of the screen as well as left and right. In the background you can see the other side of the arena, and the milling crowds shouting slogans to the fighters.

Once the fight starts, moves are made using a combination of fire button and directions. Three sets of moves are available: one using the directions only, another using the direction keys or joystick after fire has been pressed once and the third set is accessed after fire has been pressed twice.

At least fifteen opponents have to be beaten in the arena before you get to the betting screen. Once you get to the bookies the points accumulated can be gambled, using the 1 key as up and Q as down to select the amount to be gambled. Press fire and then, using the same keys, you decide who to gamble on. If you win, then you double your money. Lose and the stake money becomes the bookie's. If all your money is lost then Marcus gets thrown back into the arena. Get 32,400 eagles and a Marcus gets his coveted Certificate of Freedom.

CRITICISM

● **'I was initially impressed when I clapped eyes on this program — the big figures fighting away with one another looked really good. It was only when I got down to playing it than I started to see the niggly glitches in the graphics — sometimes the men start climbing up the wall. The thumb which comes out when a player is defeated is pretty rotten — it's so-o-o-o slow and has about three frames of animation. Playing** Gladiator **is pretty tricky too; I'm sure the control method could be improved no end. As it stands, it's very confusing, even when you've played it a few times. Even so, it could be called a follow on from Exploding Fist, and if you like games of that genre then you could well like this.'**

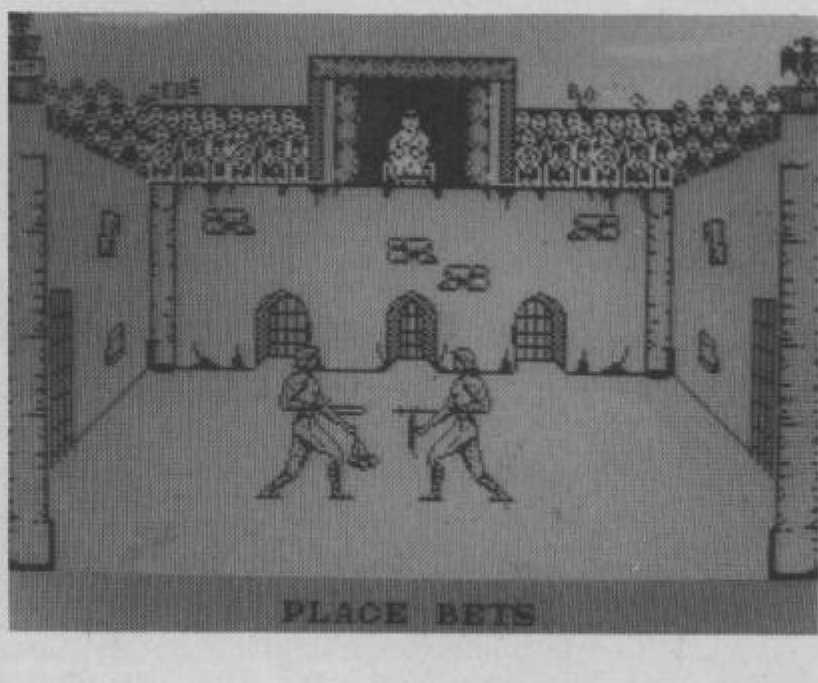
● *'It seems to be all gore and violence at the moment with Domark. I mean, with* Friday the Thirteenth *and now* Gladiator. *I must admit to getting a bit tired of fighting games. Though lacking a lot of the arcade appeal of other such programs,* Gladiator *does hold a great deal more depth. Being allowed to choose weapons before a match adds a great deal to the game.* Gladiator *isn't really hit material, though if you do like this type of game then it really would be worth seeing, since the depth of play involved is far greater than in any of its rivals.'*

● 'After *A View To A Kill* I wasn't expecting much from Domark, which is just as well after playing *Gladiator*. At first look *Gladiator* seems to be a very neat and realistic copy of the old gladiator fights, but when you finally get into the fight you realize that the game is totally *unplayable*. I found the game very confusing, and very unuserfriendly. Your gladiator has too many controls which are accessed in too hard a manner. With less controls which were easier to use, I would have given it a higher rating. *Gladiator* is trying to enter an area where *Exploding Fist* rules supreme. For me this comes nowhere near it.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Player One: 1 to 5 up screen, Q to T down, A, D, G left, S, F right, C, Z, X, C, V fire. Player Two 6 to 0 up screen, Y to P down, J, L left, H, K ENTER right, B, N, M, S, B fire.
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: unresponsive, and complicated
Use of colour: monochromatic, to avoid attribute clash
Graphics: adequate backdrops
Sound: a bit of white noise to indicate a hit
Skill levels: one, gets harder
Screens: five
General rating: a complicated fighting game which has a lot of depth

Use of computer	**73%**
Graphics	**81%**
Playability	**72%**
Getting started	**65%**
Addictive qualities	**82%**
Value for money	**75%**
Overall	**77%**



INTERNATIONAL KARATE

Producer: System 3
Retail price: **£6.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **The Sysem 3 team**

The flavour of the moment seems to have a definite bias towards the oriental. System 3's long awaited, and somewhat overdue Karate simulation finally joins the ranks of combat games, which are all the rage on the Spectrum just now.

International Karate is another beat em up fought against backdrops depicting famous cities around the world, rather than in an oriental setting. The game scenario itself is very simple - it's a battle between two Karate masters played over three rounds; the first to win two rounds wins that bout. The idea is to outscore your opponent in each round within the 30 second time limit. If you win, bonus points are awarded according to how much time remains on the clock at the moment of victory.

The game allows you to play speech bubble above the judge's head. The battle then ensues and the players have to try to knock down their opponent. The judge bursts into speech again when one of the players achieves a 'knockout', announcing his decision as to whether a full or half point has been awarded. The first player to reach two points wins the round — and if neither combatant clocks up two points, the winner is the fighter with the most points. The player who's the first to win two out of the three bouts is then allowed to tackle a bonus screen.

The first bonus screen is a woodblock-kicking exercise where you have to try to break as many pieces of wood as possible, with points awarded according to the amount of firewood you create. The second bonus screen, tackled by the winner of the second round is a sort of dodge 'em/punch 'em screen. A variety of objects is thrown from either side of the screen and you have to destroy them by punching or kicking them into oblivion. Again, bonus points are collected according to the amount of damage you wreak.



either one or two players. If you're playing single player then the computer takes control of the opposition. As in such fighting games, there are a multitude of movements available — a total of sixteen punches and kicks — with which to terrify and generally damage your opponent. Moves are made using different combinations of key presses, using a total of nine keys for each player.

The competition is overseen by a judge, who monitors the skills of the combatants and starts each fight by shouting 'begin' in very clear speech — and in case you don't quite catch the command, the words are also printed on the screen in a

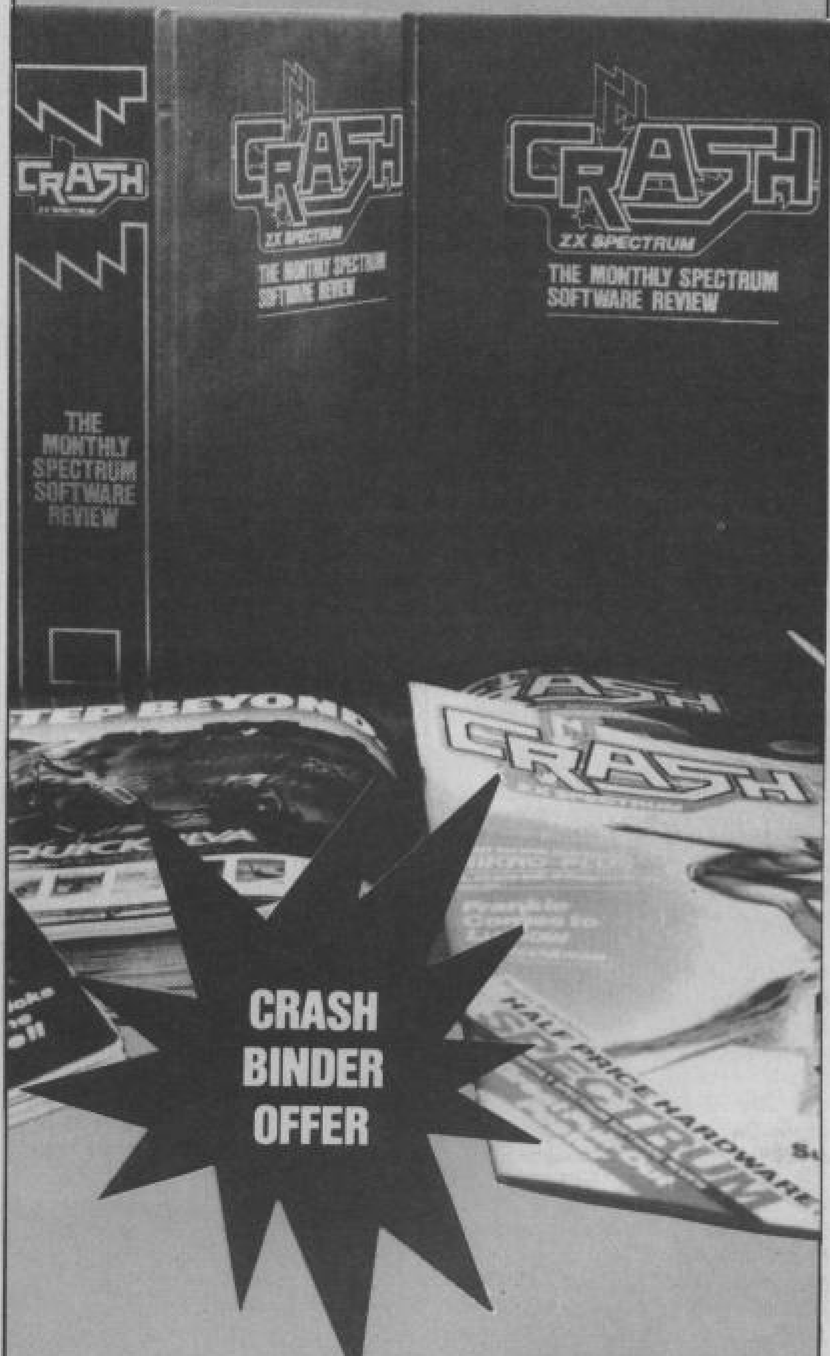
When the bonus screen stage is completed, the winner is transported to another part of the world where the battle resumes and you can find yourself scrapping away in Rio, New York, London and Sydney.

CRITICISM

● **'The blurb on the cassette cover says 'and you thought you'd seen a Karate game'. Unfortunately I have - it's called** *Way of the Exploding Fist* **and it's better than this. The animation on** *International Karate* **is a**

CRASH BINDERS

Each binder takes twelve issues of CRASH held in place by small white plastic straps for ease of access. There's also a year sticker for the spine. The hand tooled, gold bound, Moroccan leather version would have cost about £150 each, so we've settled for the next best thing, a rich blue with gold-ish tooling on the front cover and the spine.



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lot cruder than *Fist*, it takes up less frames than the latter and consequently looks rather flickery when compared directly. There are some glitches as well, like the 'wrap round' when a player gets killed near the edge of a screen - half his body appears on one side and half on the other. The gameplay is a bit awkward too - the multitude of keys makes the game very difficult to get into, but once you've got them sussed it's very easy to beat the computer opponent. *IK*'s redeeming feature is the excellent speech - in my opinion the best I've heard: it's very clear and understandable. When it comes down to the nitty gritty — ie which Karate game is the best, then I must confess that *Fist* still comes out top. But if you're well into beat em ups, then you might want to add this one to your collection . . .'

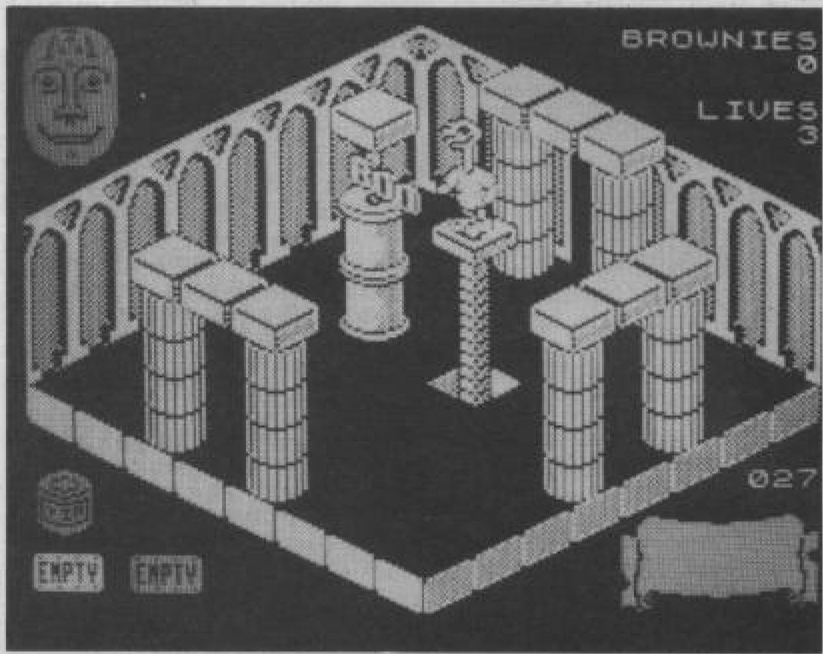
● *'Yet another fighting simulation. I wasn't much of a fan of this type of game in the first place, and there's now so many of them . . . I admit that some of them are fun for a while but they do get very boring when all you have to do is beat up your computer. This one is no different from the rest. The graphics are a bit below average for this type of game — I felt the characters were badly drawn and very jerky. Sound is fairly good: there is a nice title tune, spot effects during the game and some very good speech. As for gameplay I can't really say that it's compelling — I found that I didn't need much strategy to beat the computer. Not a bad offering really, considering the price I suppose, but I wasn't really grabbed by the game.'*

● 'Such a long wait — this game has been dogged by disaster and problems, and now arrives very late. Maybe a bit too late — lots of fighting games are already nestling in software collections already. *International Karate* has got a few nice touches, such as the speech, and the backdrops are quite pretty. Somehow, though, it doesn't come across as a polished game: four or five months ago, however, and it might have had a different reception . . . One for fighting fans, really, to complete the collection.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Player 1 W to jump, E lunge punch, D walk forward, C chest kick, X foot sweep, Z crouch punch, A walk backwards, Q back lunge punch, W and S flying kick, E and S front somersault, D and S front kick, C and S front side kick, X and S back crouch punch, A and S back side kick, A and S roundhouse, Q and S back somersault. Similar arrangement for player two. 7 to quit game
Joystick: Ram Turbo
Keyboard play: could have been a lot better
Use of colour: reasonable
Graphics: nice backdrops, shame about the rather crude characters
Sound: excellent speech, and some good effects
Skill levels: gets harder!
Screens: 5 backdrops
General rating: disappointing overall, given the wait

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	71%
Playability	57%
Getting started	61%
Addictive qualities	67%
Value for money	69%
Overall	**68%**



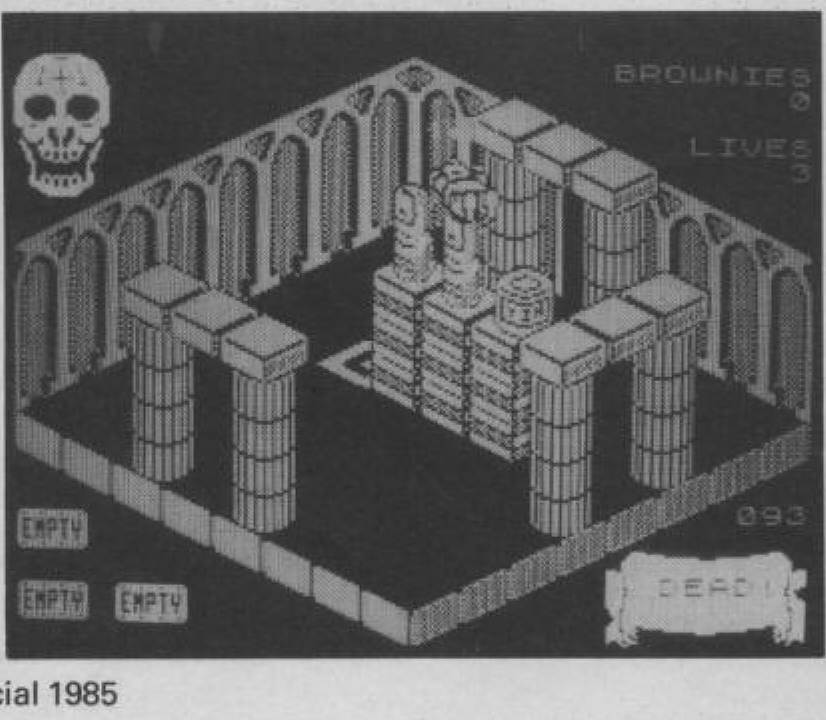
SWEEVO'S WORLD

Preview the second . . .

Okay, okay, so it's another preview of *Sweevo's World*. You wouldn't believe how close we were to having a full review this issue — a finished copy of the game arrived literally hours after our deadline, giving us enough time to write this intro and little else . . .
. . . however, Gargoyle did give us an incomplete copy of the game to look at some time ago, so we thought we would at least give you a taste of what's to come — now you can't say fairer than that, can you?

As you may have noticed from the screen shots the star of the game, Sweevo, is rather a strange looking chap. The game itself is also something of an oddity since it features some of the weirdest, wackiest and original puzzles ever seen in an arcade adventure of this type. Yes, *Sweevo's World* **looks** like Ultimate's *Knight Lore* and *Alien 8*, but any similarities stop there . . .

Robin mentioned in his preview last month that the game will consist of around 200 screens and several levels (the two Ultimate games only boast 128 screens, and most of those are empty). It turns out Gargoyle managed to cram in 184 highly detailed screens and have spread them over four interlinked levels — Really Free, Lonesome Pine, Fingers and Apple Pie! Weird? — Wait 'til you see the screens! The first level, Really Free, has plenty of fruit, (and its fair share of nutcases) to avoid along with really devious traps and puzzles. In one room there is a tin that needs to be collected. It sits alone in the corner, appearing perfectly innocuous, so you decide to walk over and pick it up — only to find yourself permanently trapped behind a 'fence' of fingers that suddenly popped up! Mean.



Meaner still is a room where you have to walk through a 'mazelet', a sort of very small maze, in order to exit the other side. But as you may expect, things are not so easy — suspended on glass tubes at points of most inconvenience along the way are three one-ton weights, which squash poor Sweevo should he knock away their fragile supports and not move out of the way quickly enough!

The finished game will have eight Widgers to collect and four Goose Stepping Dictators and Horrible Little Girls to dispose of or avoid. This is easier said than done though, since both move **very** fast and are exceedingly aggressive. There will also be sixteen Brownies for the taking, thus gaining extra Brownie points, as well as eight Geese, who when shocked from behind, lay Golden Ergs which provide extra energy. Greg Follis of Gargoyle mentioned between 25 and 30 points are awarded for tidiness — whatever that means!

The many puzzles throughout the game appear very tough at first, but with a bit of logical thought they should prove fairly straightforward to solve. Greg Follis of Gargoyle feels that although the game is very difficult, it's certainly 'finishable'. Even so, there are many hours of absorbing and enjoyable play to be had in the meantime!



A CRASH Smash

S·P·E·L·L·B·O·U·N·D

SPELL-BOUND

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail price: **£2.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **David Jones**



As a continuation of his adventures in *Finders Keepers*, Magic Knight now reappears in a new Mastertronic release, *Spellbound*. Part of the new Mad Games range, *Spellbound* is a true graphic adventure.

Magic Knight's mentor and teacher, Gimbal the Wizard, has accidentally managed to bind you and seven other characters within a summon spell. The spell was intended to be an aid to Gimbal's quest for better tasting rice pudding. Due to a slight typographical error that arose when the incantations were translated from ancient English to slightly less ancient English, things went a little bit wrong. Now our hero is trapped within a strange and unfamiliar land with a bunch of people from different slices of history. Being the brave good guy among the collection of oddities it's down to Magic Knight to return the various peoples to their respective time/space zones. First on your list of major things to do is to release Gimbal from a self inflicted white out spell but, as in any good adventure, there's a number of smaller tasks to perform first.

Though *Spellbound* looks very similar to any run of the mill left/right and jump game, pressing fire soon shatters that illusion. Based around a windowing system by the name of Windowvision, fire opens up the primary menu replete with a list of options available to Magic Knight. A pointer controlled by the up and down keys highlights various options as you move it about, and fire takes you to the sub menu for that option. For each option on the menu there's a corresponding button on the keyboard — thus avoiding any hassle for people who're a bit kack-handed when it comes to using the pointer.

When you change to a sub window it opens up over the main one and a pointer appears on the sub directory. Using this system, the amount of options available to you easy equals those within many text adventures. As you progress through the game the options and actions open to you change, allowing Magic Knight to take advantage of any new objects or powers he may have acquired — extra options are highlighted in white.

Apart from using the menu system, you can move Magic Knight around the screens with left, right and jump. Obviously Magic Knight has developed some pretty impressive leg muscles since his last game: jump causes him to take a real mega leap skywards.

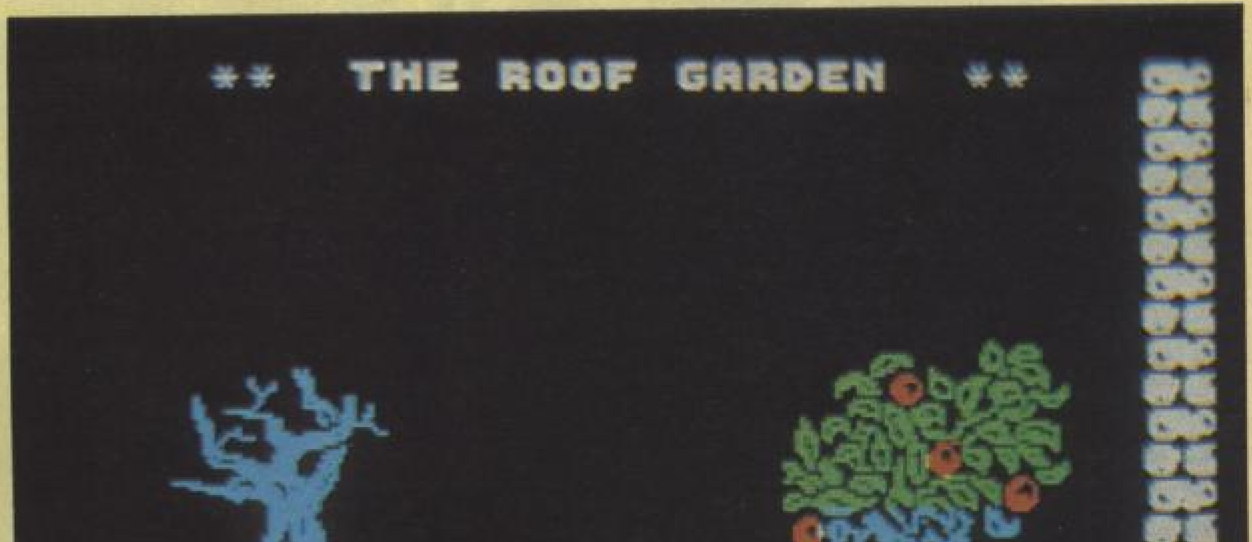
Any object or character you may come across can be examined via the main menu. While a character is being examined, a small screen with a graphic of the character under scrutiny appears. Such details as strength, happiness, stamina, spell power and food level are detailed. You can even examine yourself; very handy, since being a brave knight expends strength quite a bit and if it reaches zero the games over. When it comes to examining object, a graphic of the object under scrutiny is displayed together with details on the four different attributes possessed by objects: weight, magic power, read and drop status. The read and drop information tell whether you can drop the object you've acquired or use the read function on it to glean information. The weight reading can be critical as well. The more the the knight carries, the quicker his strength is sapped. If Magic Knight is too weak then he won't be able to pick up heavy objects.

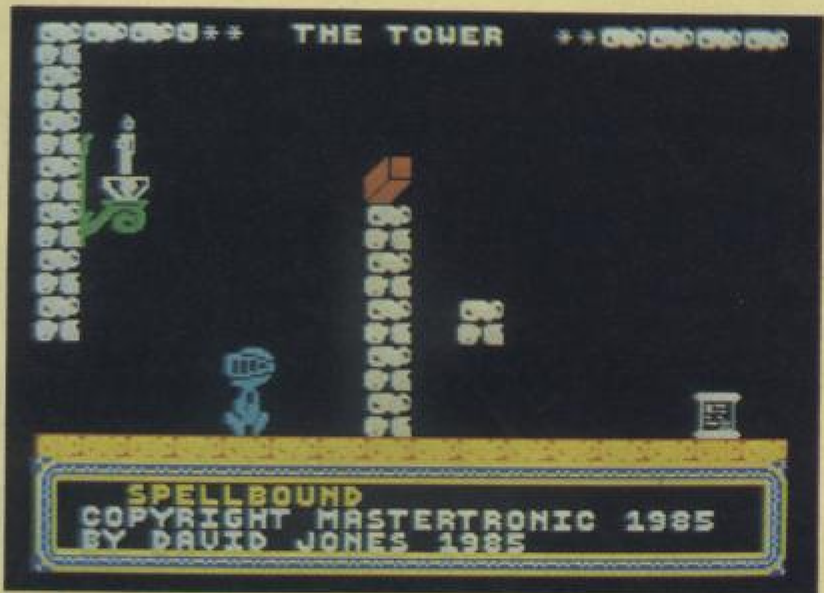
There's a large strategic element to the game. The other captives of the summon spell wander about in a bit of a daze and need looking after. You need to command characters to do things for their own good, and you have to get hold of the wand of command before the option which allows you to tell people what to do appears on your menu. Since the characters don't have the sense to fend for themselves, it's up to you to tell them to go away, eat, drink, and be happy.

If your fellow captives aren't kept in good health they may well die .... The characters also have to be kept happy or it's likely they get in a bit of a sulk and be loathe to obey any commands that may be issued to them. Other people may well be in possession of objects you need but understandably they like to keep hold of any thing they've got. Command a character to go to sleep and anything they have can be easily pilfered. When a character is asleep it's also possible to give them something they wouldn't normally accept.

The domain in which the spell of summoning has trapped the cast of characters is split into seven floors, each spanning around seven or eight screens. To travel between floors the Knight has to use the lift found at the extreme left hand side of each floor.

Some objects can be found which can't actually be used —





they do offer clues, however, and the clue they contain can usually be liberated with the read function. A few totally useless, though amusing, objects litter the place as well. Upon starting, Magic Knight's only possession is an advert: read this and you're informed that David Jones created *Spellbound* and suggests going out and buying *Finders Keepers*.

Another addition to the Knight's worries is that there's only 48 hours to complete his task. Oh dear. Better get going . . .

CRITICISM

● **'I'm always a bit cynical of software houses' claims to produce true graphical adventures but it seems that Mastertronic have actually come up with the goods.** ***Finders Keepers*** **was excellent but** ***Spellbound*** **is superlative. Windowvision is about the best selection method for using and interacting with objects and characters I've seen yet. It blows away both** ***Frankie*** **and** ***Shadowfire*** **making them both seem awkward and outdated. Graphically, the game is well above average: the movement of Magic Knight as he athletically leaps about is great. Convincing gravity too. Overall, about the best game of it's type on the Spectrum to date. Even if it were priced around the ten pound mark I'd still recommend it as a bargain but for £2.99 you'd be MAD not to buy it!**

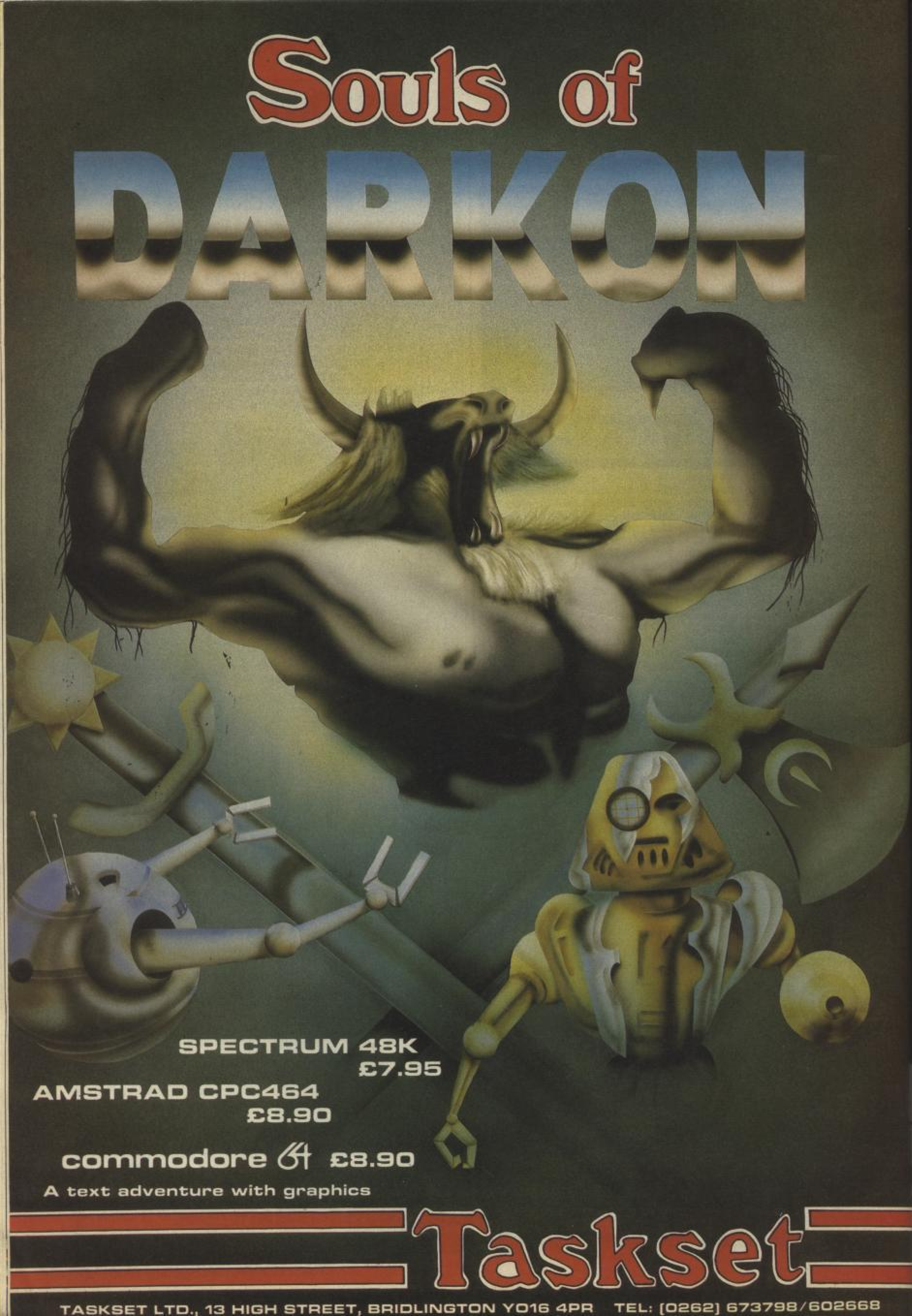
● *'*Finders Keepers *was Mastertronic's best game until now. David Jones has improved on the features in* Finders Keepers *and has come up with a first rate game. The graphics are generally good, but not some of the best around. What makes this game is the presentation. It's very easy to play without actually reading the instructions and subsequently it doesn't take long before you are addicted. The menus that appear make the game easy to understand and they cut out the need for mega quick reactions which other arcade adventures depend on. If you've got £2.99 to spare then get this, you won't regret it!'*

● '1My blue knight materialised: 'What now?' I cried! But then as I started bouncing all over the millions of screens, I was really getting into the feel of it; when I pulled myself away from it, I could easily say I was well and truly hooked. Fab sound and mega-brill windowing with the odd bit of great graphics gave me the feeling that this was going to be a smash! And when they told me that it was only £2.99 I really freaked out! Next time you find yourself with three quid, this is something you must get.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: A/Z up,down N/M left,right and space for fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: a bit of attribute clash, but hardly noticeable. Very good
Graphics: Big, bold and detailed
Sound: Not a lot but what it does do is good
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 50
General rating: An outstanding game, especially for the money

Use of computer	96%
Graphics	89%
Playability	91%
Getting started	92%
Addictive qualities	89%
Value for money	98%
Overall	95%


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A CRASH Smash

S•A•B•O•T•E•U•R



SABOTEUR

Producer: Durrell
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Clive Townsend**

As a gun for hire you've been hired to liberate a computer disk held within a high security fortress cunningly disguised as a warehouse. The disk holds the names of a number of rebel leaders and you're up against the clock. The idea is to find a bomb, hidden somewhere within the complex, get the disk and leave the bomb behind, ticking down to detonation. All this before the time limit expires and the information stored on the disk is sent to outlying terminals. Being a sensible sort of chap, you want to escape and there's a helicopter lurking on the warehouse roof, just waiting to be stolen.

The trouble is that the headquarters are heavily guarded by a number of armed guards and watchdogs as well as automatic defence systems which monitor your position in a room and then start zapping you with a laser. Your mission starts in a rubber dinghy moored just off a small pier leading to one of the warehouse entrances. Clad totally in SAS attire, black jumpsuit and bootpolish all over your face, you are initially equipped with a throwing star. As you wander through the security complex various other weapons can be found, picked up and used — each weapon can be used once only, but can be aimed at your target. Trained to a very high degree in various martial arts, you can also partake in a bit of physical baddie bashing rather than just lobbing the odd throwing star or brick about. You have a choice too: a killer punch or a ninja style dropkick are both equally deadly to any guards you may find.

The security complex is split among three different sections. The first is the warehouse front, containing the helicopter and primary defence force. If you get down into the sewers then you can link up to the underground train taking you into the first part of the computer centre. From here the second underground train has to be found to get you into the second computer centre. This is where the disk and bomb are held. Once the disk has been rescued and the bomb primed a countdown starts showing the remaining time in which to reach the helicopter. A quick dash back through the sewers and train systems is required unless you like having dead mercenary smeared all over the walls.

Whilst bashing your way through various adversaries your progress is charted via two screens. The main screen shows a sideview of the room you're in. Your saboteur is about a quarter of the screen high and sproings and cavorts about in full animation. As well as running and fighting he can also perform a nifty tuck jump for bouncing over chasms and gaps. Using the ladders, platforms or steps provided, your hero travels around the complex of colour coded levels.

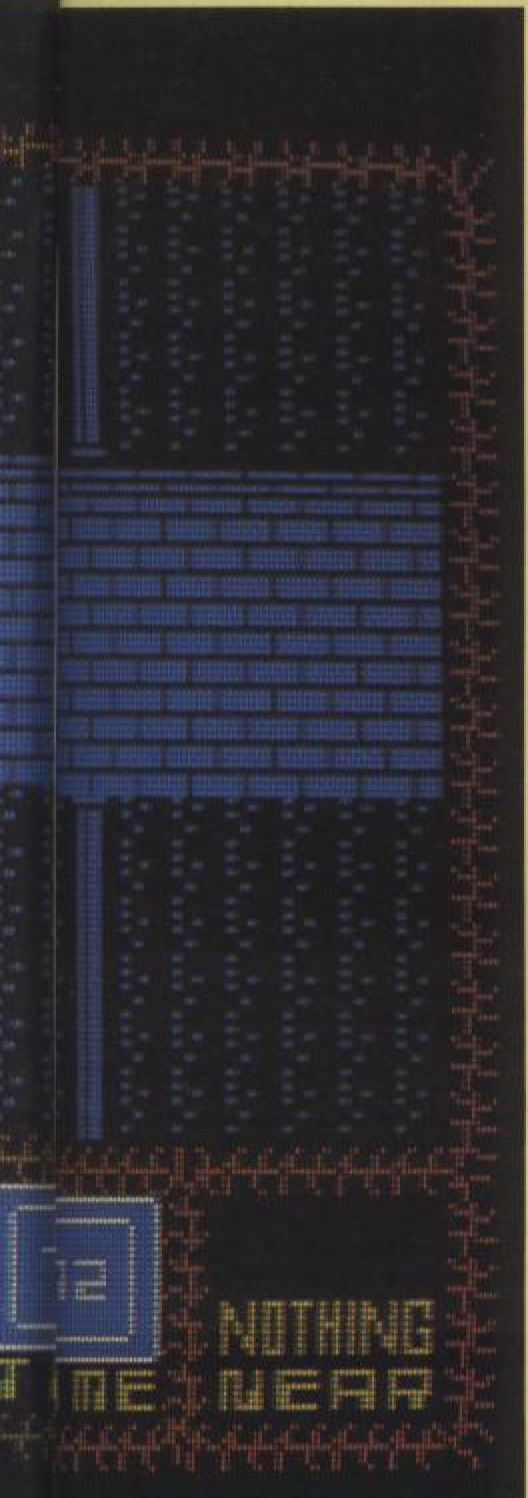
The bottom quarter of the screen is used to display your status. Only one object can be held at a time, the object you're holding appearing in a window on the left hand corner of the status area, while objects close by and available for collection are shown in the window to the right side of this screen. Pressing fire uses the object within your grasp, or if another object is within reach it'll be transferred into your possession.

An energy bar along the bottom of the screen shows how your energy level is faring. Your lifeforce is sapped by contact with fighting guards, who fire rubber bullets, guard dogs, which bite, and the laser defence system which is generally bad for your health. Standing about doing nothing for a while, however, allows ebbing energy force to return.

The game isn't played for points — what self respecting mercenary works for points? Money's the name of the game, and a paymeter clocks up a few hundred dollars each time you do for a guard. The big money is only picked up for collecting the disk in the time limit, planting the bomb, and escaping. The programmer's obviously a dog lover, though. There's no money in killing dogs — "so why bother?" the inlay reminds you.

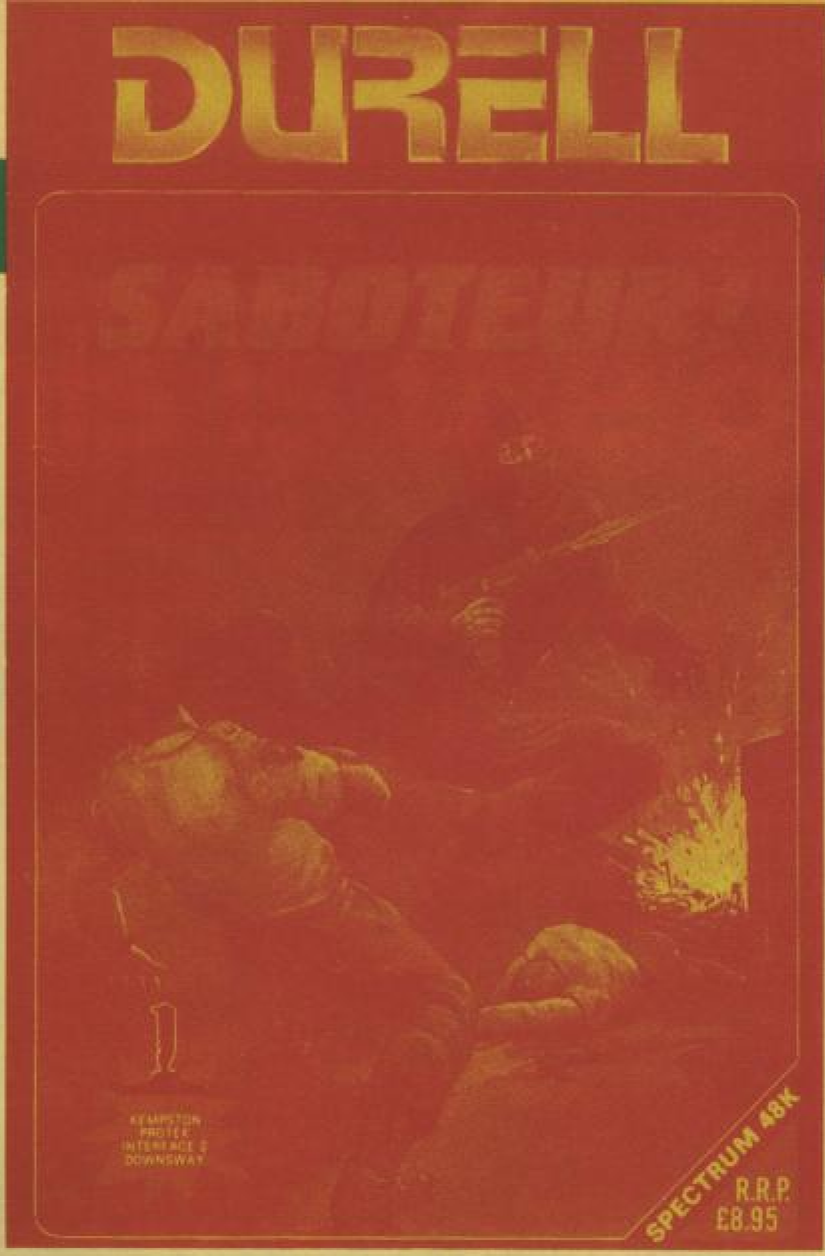
CRITICISM

● **'Though bearing some initial resemblance to** Impossible Mission, **Saboteur holds a lot more**



upon further inspection. The game is absolutely great, it's like playing a part in a Bond movie. Maybe this is the sort of game that should have been used by Domark. Level one is quite easily solved, given a bit of time and thought, but there are nine different levels each subtly harder than the last. The animation of the man is great and he's very responsive indeed. Overall a this deserves to be a hit and should have pride of place on many a Spectrum users shelf.'

● ' After *Critical Mass* I was expecting great things from Durrell and they've certainly come up with the goods. *Saboteur* must be one of the most original games of '85. The drawing point of this type of game is that it puts you in the shoes of a hero/spy just like *Spy vs Spy* and when you walk you crouch down just as if you were an intruder. The overall game is very addictive due to the variety of routes you have to take on the higher levels. Great use is made of colour — the characters are huge, with no attribute problems at all. One thing that made me laugh was the so called 'underground train' it really does look like a brilliant picture of a holiday caravan. I hope Durrell gets a CRASH Smash for this 'cos it certainly deserves it.'

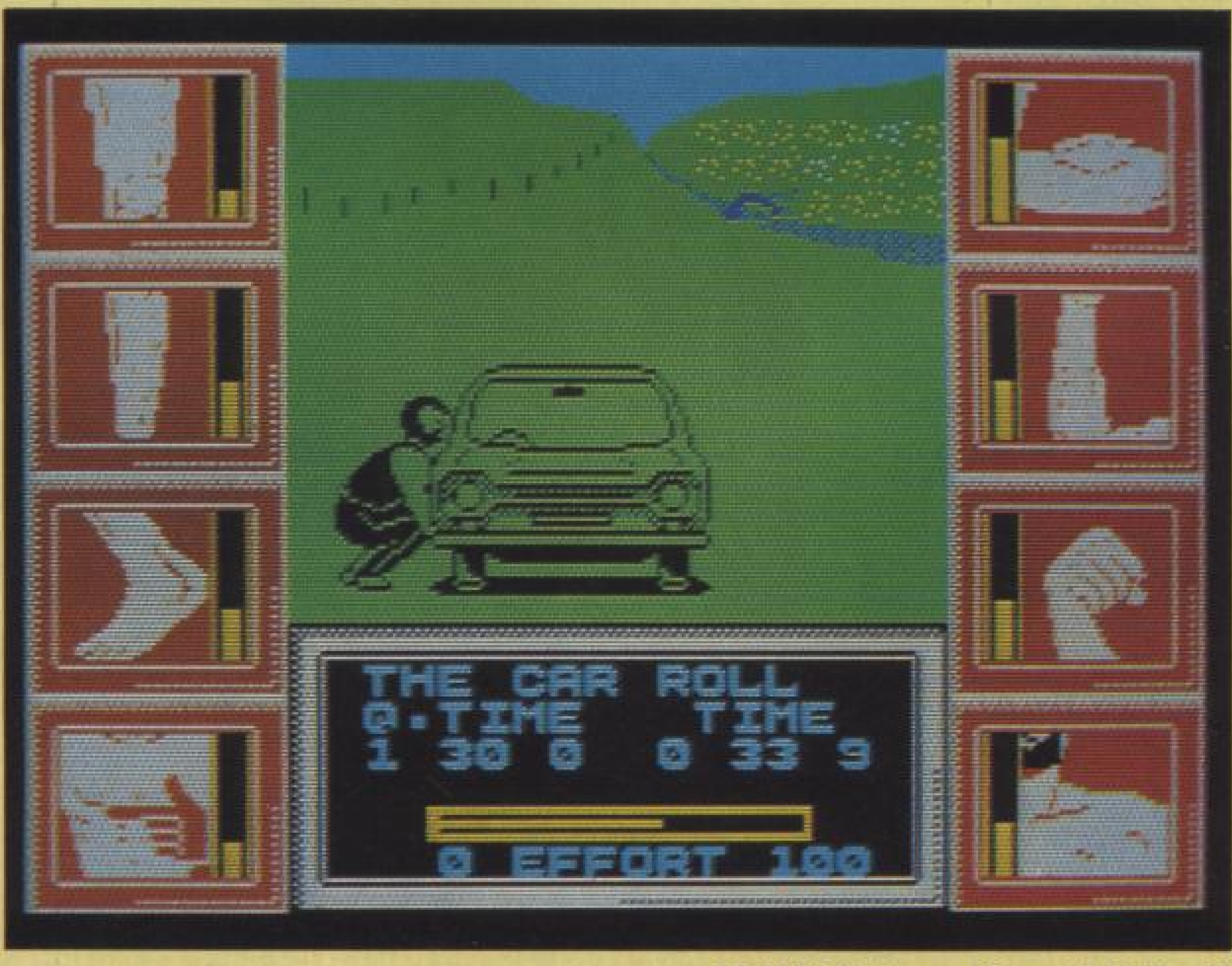


● *'Durrell Software really have pulled their act together this year. After a couple of years of mundane releases they're now producing classics like* Saboteur. *The game concept is fairly original, and as such the game is quite fun to play but what really put* Saboteur *up in my esteem was its sheer playability. Graphically the main sprite is a bit similar to the one in* Impossible Mission *but his range of movement is far greater. Overall the best release yet from Durrell and one of the better releases for the Spectrum this year.'*

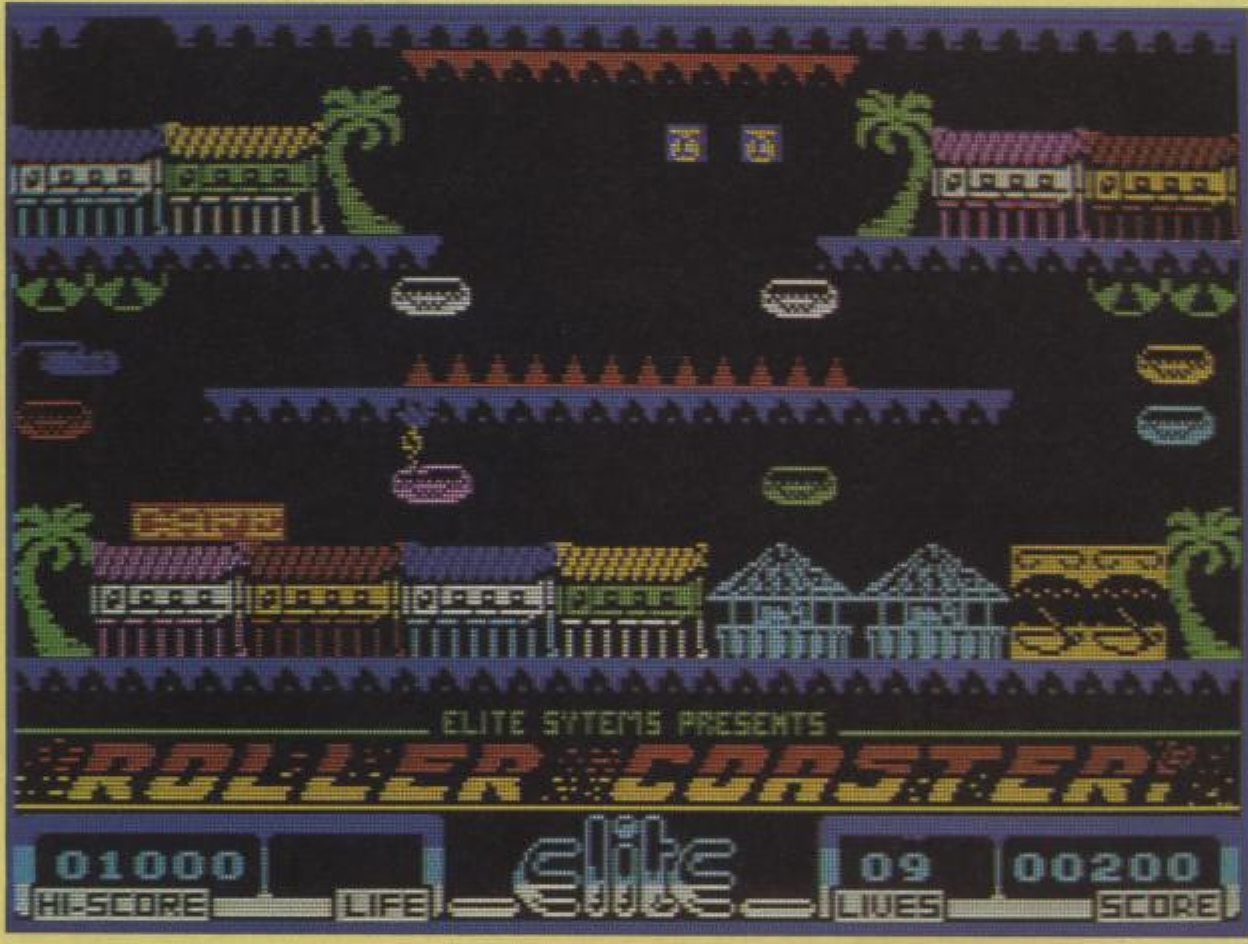
COMMENTS

Control keys: *definable*
Joystick: *Kempston, Interface II*
Keyboard play: *extremely responsive, adds to the excitement*
Use of colour: *mostly monochromatic, but still effective*
Graphics: *lovely animation, though backgrounds could do with some more detail*
Sound: *pretty neat two channel tune once loaded, and effective white noise during the game*
Skill levels: *9*
Screens: *118*
General rating: *very imaginative: deserves star status*

Use of computer	*84%*
Graphics	*92%*
Playability	*92%*
Getting started	*91%*
Addictive qualities	*94%*
Value for money	*92%*
Overall	**93%**



R•O•L•L•E•R C•O•A•S•T•E•R



ROLLER COASTER

Producer: Elite
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **S Brocklehurst**

Roller Coaster from Elite, is a fun fair simulation. Playing a punter, the idea is to collect all the cash left around the place during the day by the milling masses. The money is placed in the most awkward and precarious of perches and to get at it, various bits of active fairground machinery has to be negotiated. The background is that of typical American theme park with side-shows, palm trees, buildings and candy stores. These are located along the bottom of the playing screen while the amusements, usually, are a bit more skyrise.

Apart from a giant log flume, mini bumper cars and ferris wheel type rides, you'll also come across numerous waltzers scattered around the park. Made up of a number of separate cars that aren't connected in any way, they spin around the screen in weird sinusoidal patterns and yet retain their shape as a waltzer. Another attraction is the funhouse, a building full of platforms which cycle round, contorting and twisting while bouncing your little man along different paths.

Your character can travel and ride on any of the attractions he may find, by just jumping on. There's no need to pay! Since he's an athletic little chap, he's able to walk, run and jump, and can hitch a ride by hopping on at the right moment. Though looking big and butch with his ten gallon hat, our little hero is not invulnerable. Doing silly things like leaping of unreasonably high buildings or jumping into water takes away one of the ten lives supplied. If he is in imminent mortal peril, a little bit of zip can be added to his step by holding down M as well as a direction key. This near doubles the little sprite's pace and can be handy when attempting leaps over large gaps.

The money around the fair is represented by small blue objects that look nothing at all like money, really. Jumping through a square piece of money lets loose a satisfying squeak, and boosts the figure in the little box at the bottom of the screen which displays the money collected so far.

There are three major rides around the sixty screen fair, all of them sort of rollercoasters. The first is on the screen to the right the start location, and is an olde worlde log flume. One of the others is a gold mine and is a cave trip completes the trio. Any attempt to run up an down the track of one of the big rides is deadly, so it's best to wait for the roller coaster carriage to come along, and leap into it. As you zoom along in the car, you pass under money, hanging tantalisingly in the sky. Careful timing is needed if you're to jump up, collect the loot and land safely back in the car.

As you travel throughout the fair the different screens flick into view as the central spritette moves off the edge of the current screen — as in so many other arcade adventures. Collect all the money and you've completed the game, but there's no need to be so avaricious — you could just scamper around and explore, having fun on the rides.

CRITICISM

'I thought I'd seen all there was and could ever be in the form of platform games after Dynamite Dan **but I've been proved wrong again. Graphically,** Roller Coaster **is very good: your man and the various rides are very well drawn and animated, and the backgrounds are very colourful — which leads to a bit of attribute clash, but nothing too glaring. Controlling your bloke is very easy; I liked the idea of the 'run' key, as this helps you get out of trouble. Generally I enjoyed playing this game as it is different from the usual type of platform game.'**

'Rollercoaster *was not written by the usual Elite team, and it shows. Not taking Elite's usual 'Every Game a Mega Game' attitude, the author has turned out an enjoyable and very impressive product. Though fundamentally just an arcade adventure platform game there are so many clever extras added it makes the whole thing seem almost original. Looking at static shots in this review,* Rollercoaster *may not look all that impressive, but when you see the different objects move it takes on a whole new dimension. I really like* Rollercoaster *and it one of the most deserving titles yet to appear from Elite. It's what a game should be, just totally unpretentious and fun to play.'*

'This game is brill! No longer do we poor country bumpkins have to wait till May for the fair: *Roller Coaster* brings all the fun of the it into your living room! Wonderful graphics, terrific use of colour, and amazing addictive qualities — it's just a great game. Big wheels, cafes, bumper cars and log flumes are all found in abundance on the many screens of this, the best from Elite for a long time. It owes a little, in places to the legendary *Manic Miner*, in that here and there the old lateral thinking skills come in handy. All it needs now is an automatic, free candy-floss vendor!

COMMENTS

Control keys: O left, P right, M run faster, CAPS SHIFT to jump
Joystick: N/A
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: neatly done, but a few attribute problems
Graphics: some very cunning animation on the rides, neat
Sound: jolly tune to start with, and good effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 60
General rating: a different kind of platform game altogether. A great little game

Use of computer	87%
Graphics	88%
Playability	92%
Getting started	93%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**94%**

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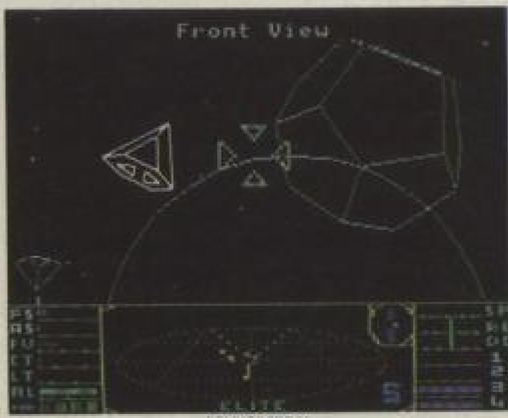


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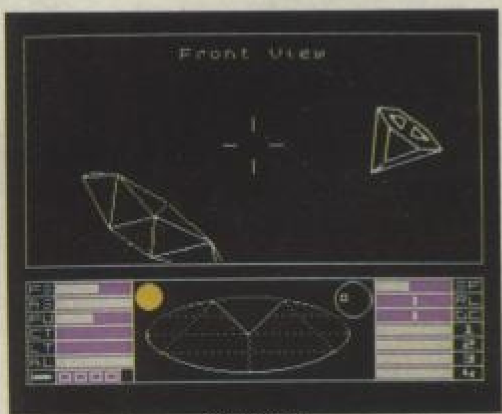
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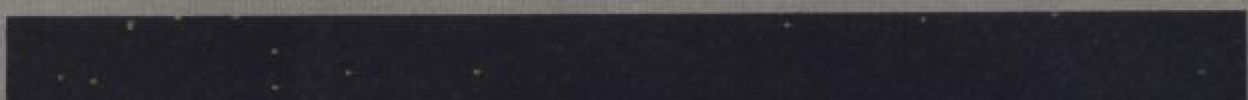


VEC-TRON

Producer: Insight
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mike Follin**

The scenario that lies behind the second game from Insight bears more than a passing resemblance to Tron. Tron the film, that it, not Tron the game. You have been transported to a wierd 'sub-spatial' dimension, and find yourself inside a computer at the helm of a fighting machine equipped with an energy shield and the obligatory Plasma Blasters.

***Vectron** is a game split into four sections. The action begins in a maze, displayed on the screen using vector graphics from the viewpoint of the pilot of the ship — in a similar way to **Buggy Blast**. You are at the controls of a craft that is incapable of stopping and moves around at a constant and very fast speed. As you approach the end of a corridor in the maze, it's necessary to change direction very rapidly to avoid an energy-sapping collision. Up and down move a sight vertically over the screen while left and right govern the way your craft shifts at a junction as well as moving the sight horizontally. The laser, or plasma blaster, fires a pulse towards the centre of the gunsight and delivers a burst of energy that'll zonk any enemies in view.*



To clear the first section, all enemy craft must be destroyed. The maze is patrolled by sinister Randomizers — sort of inverted U shape craft that patrol the corridors. The randomizers tend to inhabit the border areas of the maze, flying around the edge section enclosing the maze. In the inner reaches of the maze lurk the fireball spitting tanks. Unlike the randomizers, they can shoot at you, though if you approach them from behind they'll be unable to swivel their turret fast enough to total you.

While you're whizzing about, if you wish to see where the enemy craft are, a stab at the bottom row of keys calls up a full screen representation of the maze. Displayed with character blocks of colour, the normal screen display still functions in the background and you can plan your route on the head-up map while continuing to drive through the maze. Upon the enlarged map your ship is shown as a white attribute square, randomizers are red, and tanks appear as magenta blocks.

Only one life is supplied, and your craft begins with a limited amount of energy. Bashing into walls or enemy craft depletes your energy status drastically. Extra energy, displayed as cyan squares on the map, is available. Unlike the enemy they stay stationary and to collect the life force you must shoot them. If, by accident, you fly over an energy globe, the globe disappears and you'll be a bit nearer to death.

Once the baddies in the maze have been zapped, you have to return your ship to the portal located in the middle of the maze. As you approach it, a sort of stargate whizzes into view and zaps you into the second screen. Here you have to blast a the Rom Robot's eyes with the laser as they flash. The robot, superimposed upon a starfield, spits globules of death at your spaceship. The energy shield remaining from the first screen

39


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V•E•C•T•R•O•N

is carried forward but the globes fired by the robot deplete it badly.

During the second phase, the ship's map computer is destroyed and when you return to the main maze for phase three of the game you're on your own, mapless. The idea is to reach the warp in the bottom right hand corner of the maze, through which you can make good your escape. The trouble is that the ship is placed randomly within the maze and some keen navigational skills are needed to suss out where you are. Two randomizers fly around the maze, just to make life more complicated.

The last screen is the escape section, displaying a rear view as you try to shoot the pursuing Randomizers and Tanks that are thrown at you while to try to run away. Zap them and you're free, fail and it's back to the title screen.

As well as you energy limitation, there is also a limited amount of time for your escape attempt: the time remaining is constantly shown on a countdown timer on the bottom left of the screen, and you'd better make good your escape if you want to fly again.

CRITICISM

● **'Vectron is just about one of the best games I've seen for the Spectrum for eons. It really is a classic. Even the first screen alone would have made** Vectron **a classic for me but there are four very different sheets, each presenting a considerable challenge. The graphics are exceptional, the speed they move at really amazed me. Recognizers move in a truly outstanding way, keeping definition however close they get to you. Using the attribute file to overlay a map of the maze was an inspired idea. Mike Follin and Insight should go a long way with such a high standard of product.'**

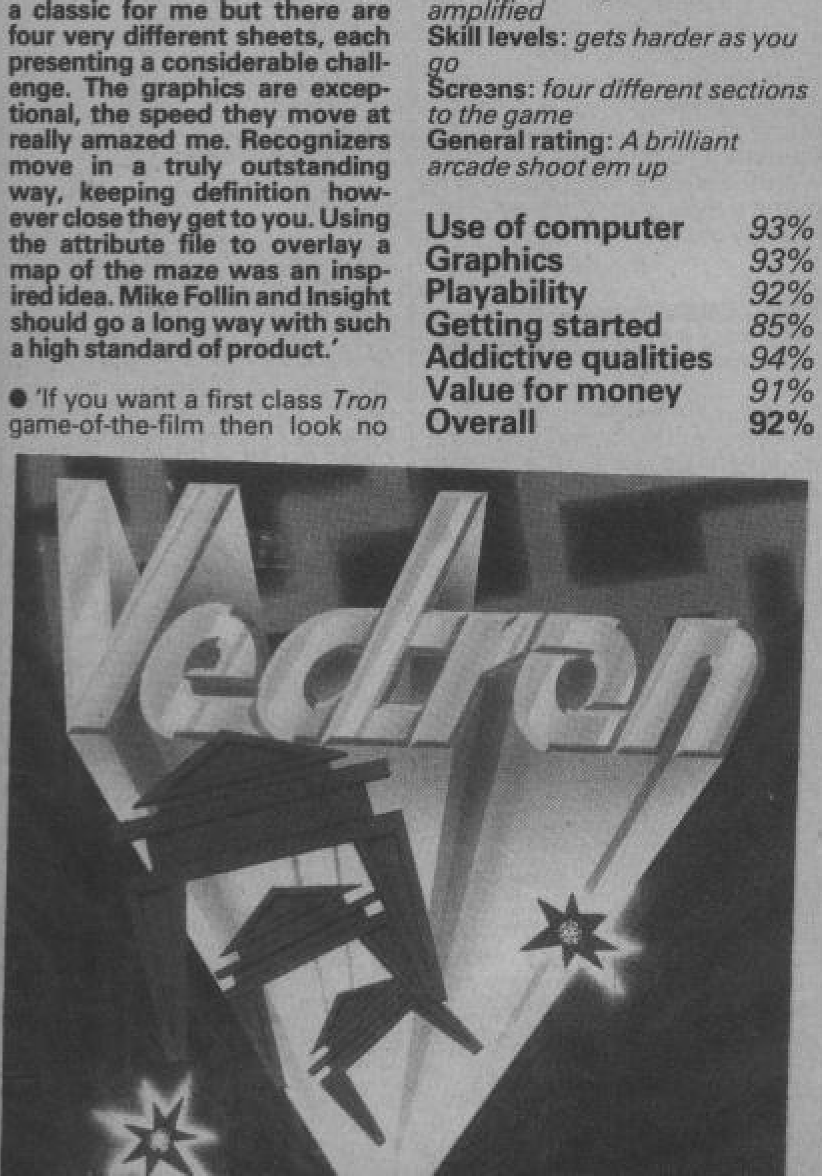
● 'If you want a first class *Tron* game-of-the-film then look no further than this. Although diverging slightly from the main storyline of the classic computer film *Vectron* has many of its elements, like the baddies and the maze sequence. The sheer speed of the program is well impressive and the 3D graphics are THE best I've ever seen. *Vectron* is pretty hard, but is that sort of game which keeps you coming back for more. A real classic which should definitely appear at the bottom of your Christmas stocking.'

● *'To begin with I wasn't all that keen on this game, but after a few hours of practise I really started to get into it. My only gripe, apart for the initial difficulty of the game, is the fact that there isn't a high score table or anything similar to tell you how close you've got to the end of the game. The use of graphics is very good, as is the use of sound — the tune is excellent. I greatly enjoyed playing* Vectron, *although I'm not sure it would offer much to the games player who likes to use his brains as well as his quick reactions. A first-rate shoot em up, though.'*

COMMENTS

Control keys: *definable*
Joystick: *Sinclair, Kempston, Cursor*
Keyboard play: *very responsive*
Use of colour: *excellent*
Graphics: *incredibly fast, and cunning*
Sound: *fab — great when amplified*
Skill levels: *gets harder as you go*
Screens: *four different sections to the game*
General rating: *A brilliant arcade shoot em up*

Use of computer	*93%*
Graphics	*93%*
Playability	*92%*
Getting started	*85%*
Addictive qualities	*94%*
Value for money	*91%*
Overall	**92%**



Reviews

SCREENPLAY



Producer: Macmillan Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Author: **Pippa Lewis**

I've been handed this piece of software to review because I'm supposed to be an expert, having spent much of my pre-CRASH time as a film cameraman and TV film editor. Whether this really qualifies me is another matter . . . !

Screenplay is described as a means of creating your own film or TV programme on a computer. The package comes as a cassette with two programs on it and a booklet which describes some film techniques and has a section telling you how to use the software. Oddly, it doesn't really explain what the end result is going to be, although it does tell you that you can save your programmes on video — if you have a video recorder.

The 26-page booklet is the obvious, indeed only, starting place. The first 16 pages are broken up into general chapters on the subject. **How film works** describes very briefly the technical history of film, showing 'flicker toys' and 'flicker books'. It attempts to show how moving images are created by revealing lots of still shots, each action slightly advanced on the last. **How the camera works** explains the basic mechanism of a film camera, what photographic film is, camera shutters, lenses and film paths. **Film tricks** explains such devices as fades, dissolves, front projection, mattes, double exposures and the like. This is followed by **How TV works**, a quick run through of the electronic process and camera, which runs neatly into **TV tricks**, where mixes, double shots, digital machine effects, character generators and Chroma key are explained.

Making a film or TV programme outlines the roles of the producer, script, wardrobe and so on, and simply explains the function of animation, sound tracks and editing. This is followed by a section on cell animation, and then we're into **Using the software**.

So far so good. The booklet is not a handbook on film making, and its explanations are of the simplest kind, accompanied by useful illustrations. I suppose all of this could awaken someone's interest sufficiently to go into the subject in more detail but of itself it barely scratches the surface. Using the software however, is less successful in its presentation — but first let's look at the computer program.

Screenplay is icon-driven. A main menu presents seven icons, **load, save, wordshot, soundtrack, action, screenshot** and **Take 1**. Load and save speak for themselves — a vital function since everything you do must be saved for combining with other elements. All the other options present sub-menu icons. **Wordshot** is the storyboard and dialogue department. Text can be written in normal or italic mode, in several directions across the screen and in a range of ink and paper colours. Double sized letters may be used. One icon allows rubbing out of a screen, and other work may be loaded in or saved out.

Soundtrack is a music editor. Films rely heavily on sound effects (FX), but there's no provision for that, and the Spectrum isn't exactly the best beast for effects. Notes may be entered, heard or rubbed out as well as saved. Other music pieces may be loaded in for adding to them or altering.

Action is a character generator and editor, which allows you to build up figures or objects, invert them, mirror or rotate them and two-frame animate them. Icons are used for all the actions, with a grid being drawn in the display area and the cursor keys used to fill in the character grid. Black or white (rubs out pixels) is toggled on or off with the zero key. Again, ink and paper colours may be selected, and everything saved or earlier work loaded in.

Screenshot is another graphics generator/editor, allowing the creation of background scenery for your movie. A 'thick' or 'thin' pencil may be used, designs and shapes being done on a blow-up grid similar to that used in **action**. Closed shapes can be filled from the Spectrum's colour palette, differentiating between ink and paper.

Take 1 is the editing department, the moment when all your elements are combined to your own choosing. 'Frames' may be dealt with one by one. Characters may be brought from memory onto the screen and positioned with the cursor, then taken through the screen to complete their action. It's possible to have up to 12 sprites on screen at one time. Music may be added at appropriate moments, and the dialogue you have written can be scrolled across the bottom of the screen to complete the effect. A final icon allows a 'premiere' of your masterpiece.

The booklet details how to set ▶

up computer and video recorder to save out the finished film for a later viewing on the telly (this is where you amaze your family and friends)!

Side two of the cassette has a program to load in with several elements already in there. This can be used as your first exercise in using *Screenplay*. The software is described as 'easy to use', but in truth I found it rather complex and fiddly and not particularly obvious in its use. The icons help, but the inter-relation of the elements is far from clear, and the booklet's descriptions of how to use the various editors or cursor functions within a mode lacks clarity, despite the icons being shown with brief explanations of their functions.

Clearly it's possible to create a semblance of a film, but the final result is somewhat primitive, looking more like an early French talkie with English subtitles. Whilst I think there maybe quite a bit of appeal for the budding film director in*Screenplay*, and the price of the package isn't extraordinarily high, I can't really see that there is all that much point to it, and in truth the creation of film or TV programme using this computer software seems to me to be stretching the point further than it wants to go.

Roger Kean



CHIMERA

Producer: Firebird
Retail price: **£3.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **S Ahmad**

New from Firebird's Super Silver range is *Chimera*, an arcade adventure set upon a large Flying Dutchman look alike spaceship. A strange ghost ship has appeared far above the earth and placed itself in orbit over the USA. Apparently, its weapons are trained on Earth, so America, thoughtful and caring nation that it is, has decided to destroy the ghost ship. Placed around the ship are a number of warheads, all of which need to be primed before they can be activated. You have been sent upon a one man mission to prime the warheads and activate the destruction sequence to blow bits of the spaceship all over sunny America. Not a trivial task for a single operative, for who(or what)ever placed the ship into orbit also placed many barriers in the way of anyone trying to activate the warheads. Your first problem is to get past an electric fence. Hint: wander about the maze and you will soon find a spanner that can be used to manually deactivate electric fences.

Displayed from a very *Alien 8* point of view, *Chimera* uses the now trendy Ultimate style of graphics. The main sprite has to be rotated until it points in the direction you want to move, then moved. Along with the directional controls there's also a grab/use key for picking up and using handy objects found around the derelict hull. An scrolling message indicator is also included and provides a running commentary on what's happening. If you do cop it in your quest, then it'll even give a short analysis as to you why you died.

Death is waiting for you in many shapes and sizes. Grabbing certain objects can end the game rather quickly — if you reach for an activated electric fence, for instance, and you don't have the spanner then you'll have to start again. And radiators lap up your limited water reserves. You have a limited quantity of provisions when you set out on your mission, and it has to be completed before they run out. There's no mistaking when you get killed either, as the computer yells out a hefty synthesised scream.

Upon activating the warheads you then have a limited amount of time to return to your start position before the bombs go off. Naturally you want to save yourself as well as the rest of the world. Get back to home and the game's over and everyone lives happily ever after.

CRITICISM

● **'What a plot! I've seen better in an Irwin Allen movie. Still the game's not bad. It's highly derivative, in terms of Ultimate's *Knight Lore* and *Alien 8* but when all is said and done, it looks good, plays well and kept me interested for quite a while. If more titles like this are released for £3.95, we will all have something to be pleased about. If you bought the Ultimate games, then you may have had your fill of them by now. If you missed out, or are just an addict, then this has to be worth getting!'**

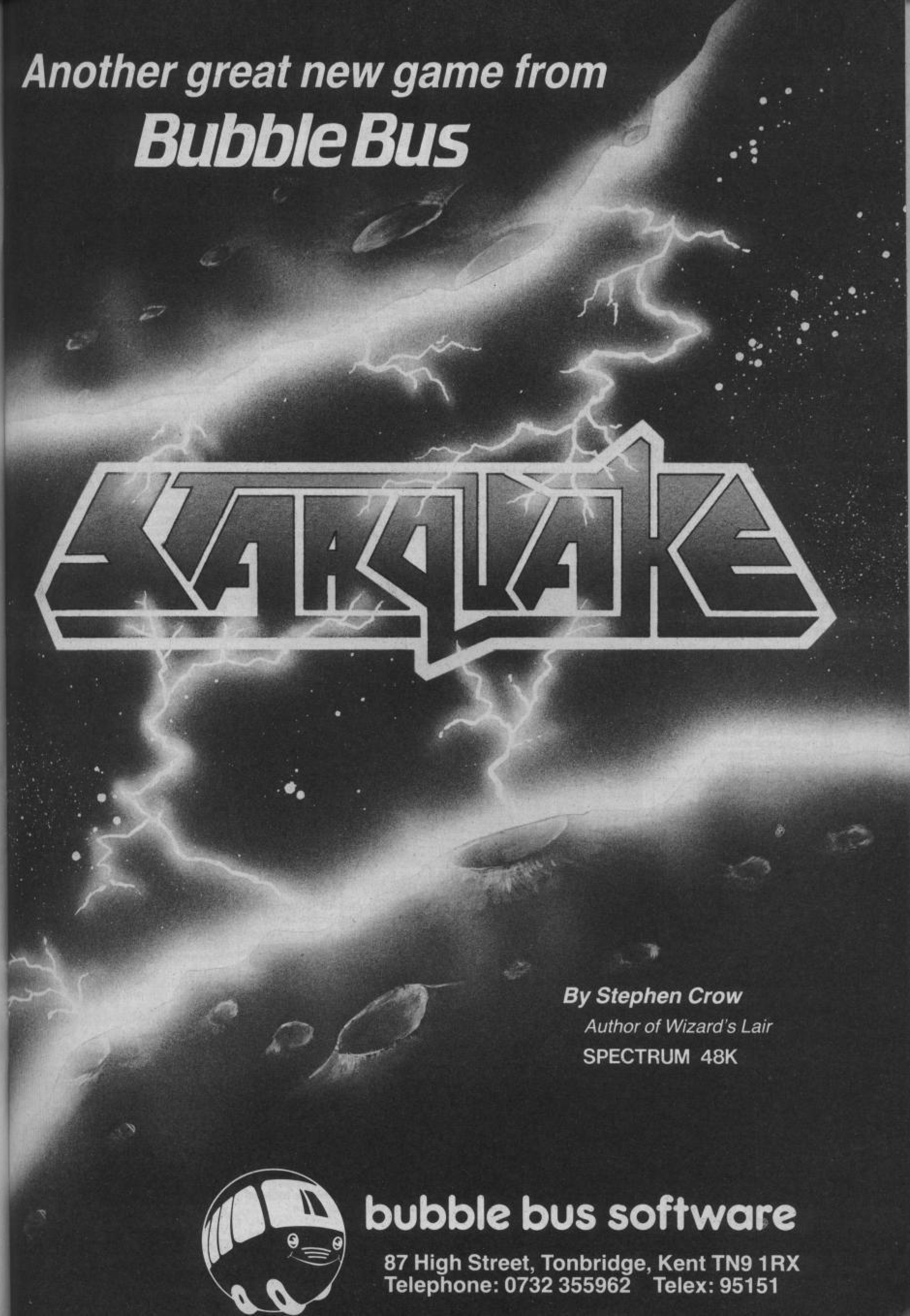
● *'*Chimera *is graphically very similar to the Ultimate games; one difference though is that it is definitely more of an arcade adventure than Ultimate's hits. As far as gameplay goes, it is very easy to get into and can prove quite addictive but I can't help thinking that there is too little to the game. While the graphics are very good, there is hardly any significant animation, which is a bit of a let down.* Chimera *is well worth the £3.95 asking price but I suspect it will mainly appeal to people who don't like complex arcade adventures.'*

● 'The thing that really gets me is that there is nothing to kill off in the game because of the logic problems. These, unfortunately, are trite, inane and (after figuring them out) leave nothing substantial to do. Bearing that in mind, there are some clever sound effects, good graphics and a game that will be something of a challenge (if for slightly annoying reasons). It's a well priced game. Perhaps it will encourage better.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z, C, B, M rotate left, X, V, N, SYMBOL SHIFT rotate right, A to ENTER move forward, Q to P collect/use, CAPS SHIFT or SPACE to pause game
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Keyboard play: Very Responsive
Use of colour: Reasonable
Graphics: Good
Sound: Good sound effects
Skill levels: One
Screens: 64
General rating: Better than many full price games

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	72%
Playability	73%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	67%
Value for money	81%
Overall	**71%**


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GEOFF CAPES STRONG-MAN

Producer: Martech
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **John Wilson**



Unlike some sports simulations *Geoff Capes Strong Man* requires more than mere joystick waggling. The game begins with a training session, the outcome of which governs your performance for the six events. The task for this session is to build Geoff's strength up as much as you can. At the bottom of the screen you see an empty bar graph. You have to waggle the joystick like crazy for a few seconds to get the red bar as far up the scale as possible. You can wimp out, and accept the default strength, but it's not that macho.

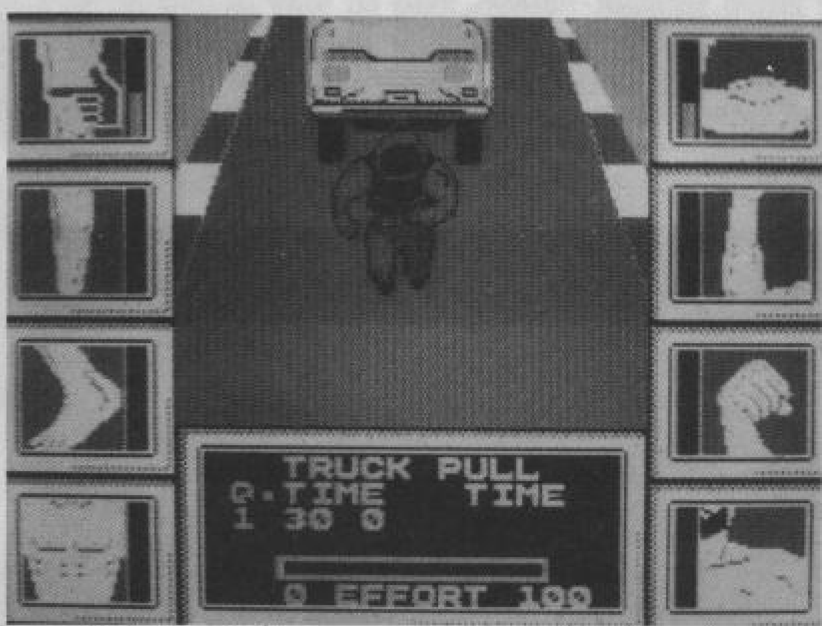
Every event begins with a rest period, when you share out the strength you have built up. The energy shown on the main bargraph can be allocated to the eight body parts represented by icons around the edge of the screen. Moving the arrow over an icon, you hold down fire until the desired amount of energy has been transferred onto the smaller bar graph contained within the icon. Repeat this process until all parts of the body are awarded some strength.

During an event, the rate at which a muscle's energy reserve is depleted depends on the level of effort you selected at the start and how often that particular part of the body is used during the task. Care has to be taken in allocating strength reserves, for if any part of the body is called upon during an event and found to have no strength, then Geoff collapses exhausted and you have to begin the game afresh.

During an event, the action is viewed on a central area of the screen, around which eight icons are grouped. The most novel feature of this game is the way in which joystick waggling has been replaced with 'icon chasing', making it much more than a 'how much punishment can you give your joystick' game. The Z and X keys are used at the start of each event to move a horizontal bar up and down on a scale from 0 to 100, indicating the effort Geoff is to put into the task in hand. The more effort Geoff puts into an event, the more rapidly he can complete it, and the more difficult it is for you!

During the Lorry Pull, Barrel Loading and Car Roll events, the eight muscle icons around the screen flash, indicating the order in which the muscles are called upon as Geoff gets going. You must follow the order of the flashing icons by moving a yellow arrow over each icon in the sequence and pressing fire. If you manage to follow the order, then the icon you selected flashes green. If you select an icon out of sequence then it flashes red. If you fall too far behind the sequence, Geoff grinds to a halt — and if you mess up totally, you can wait until all the icons flash red, indicating that the sequence is about to start again. The speed at which the icons flash yellow depends on the amount of effort you have selected — at 100 percent you daren't blink. You are competing against the clock in all three events.

The Log Chop requires you to press the fire button with split second timing. An Axe moves to and fro across the screen, above a log. When fire is pressed it descends and chops a lump out of the wood. Sections of softwood take one chop to cut through, hardwood needs two chops and knots, toughest of all, three chops. The aim is to select an easy section of log to attack, so you can cut through within the time limit.



Barrel Loading uses both joystick waggling and icon chase. Geoff must load five barrels onto a truck within the time allowed. Waggling the joystick moves him over to the barrel and makes him pick it up. From here on, chase the icons until he reaches the truck, then press fire at the right moment and Geoff lobs the barrel into the truck. Then it's back across the screen to collect the next barrel . . .

The Fairground Bell relies on a sustained period of waggling, until all of the muscle icons flash red indicating that Geoff is ready. Hitting the fire button brings the hammer down with a vengeance. The quicker you are at hitting fire after the muscles have flashed red, the better Geoff does.

Sumo Wrestling is the last event, and the only event where Geoff is forced to take on another competitor, face to face. The winner is the person who pushes his opponent out of the ring within the qualifying time. Pressing the fire button at the right moment gain ground for Geoff: bad timing loses ground.

Although Geoff is awarded a score for the completion of each event, the aim is to complete all six. If he fails in any event, either because he was exhausted or because he failed to qualify, then a new game starts. Should Geoff emerge from the events victorious you can have another training session and begin again, but this time the events are harder to complete than the time before. If you want to keep measure of your muscle power, then remember to enter your name on the high score table.

CRITICISM

● **'Though not being overkeen on this type of simulation I was quite impressed by** Geoff Capes Strong Man. **Unlike other sport type simulations, this one was not wholly dependent on joystick waggling. The muscle selector is a great idea — combined with the effort selector, quite a bit of control is available over Geoff. For a one-load game, there is quite lot scope, with the six events being quite different from one another. This is definitely one of the best games of this type to appear on the Spectrum. Worth a look at over the yuletide season.'**

● *'Sports simulations have become a bit long in the tooth now but Martech's latest release injects new vigour into the now worn idea. Because the game doesn't depend so much on smashing your joystick it is much more enjoyable. The graphics aren't that impressive and the game suffers from a distinct lack of animation, but overall it presents a fair challenge. This type of game is very playable but after you have played all the events it can start to get a bit boring.* Geoff Capes *is definitely one of those games worth getting if you know you like the type.'*

● 'I liked the way in which reaction skills as well as joystick-destroying ability have been combined in this game. The events all present a fair challenge — with the possible exception of the Log Chop, which is graphically uninspiring and fairly simplistic. You just have to crank effort up to maximum and keep pressing the fire button at the right moment. Overall a nice competitive game, from a different mould to *Daly's* and the rest. The tunes which accompanied each event were quite jolly, too!'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q to T left, Y to P right, 1 to 0 up, A to L down, SPACE to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: not recommended, especially for building up strength
Use of colour: effective
Graphics: nothing special, really, but adequate
Sound: appropriate tunes at the start of each event
Skill levels: one, getting progressively more difficult
Screens: 6 events, plus High Score table and training screens
General rating: a pleasant change from perpetual joystick waggling 'athlete' games

Use of computer	77%
Graphics	71%
Playability	85%
Getting started	81%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**78%**

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WIN A LASER DISC VIDEO MACHINE

Crash Competition

In *Swords and Sorcery* you play the part of an adventurer who has entered the catacombs wherein lies the priceless armour made by Zob, Master Armourer. As you progress round the network of corridors and rooms that form the playing area of the basic game, your character will slowly develop skills and attributes — which can be saved out to tape and re-used in subsequent games, or indeed, transferred to other game scenarios.

To begin with, your character is not blessed with very much in the way of spell-casting abilities or fighting prowess, but as you encounter monsters and defeat them and find objects and use them your character becomes more powerful. With practice, you will learn how best to use the treasures, weapons and artefacts contained within the dungeon, gaining skills and becoming more able to deal with the tricky situations that await you around every corner.

Spells can be cast, monsters greeted, threatened, fought or bribed and a whole host of tricks, traps and problems lie in wait as you explore the dungeons, using the computer as your eyes and your wits as guide. Moving through the corridors and rooms, a view of your character's progress is presented in a three dimensional window, which presents a moving picture rather as if you had a video camera strapped to your shoulder. (Weeeell, not exactly in glorious living technicolour, but we're talking Spectrum here, not Cray 1!)

For £9.95 you certainly get your money's worth of fun — and for those who want more, PSS will be offering a range of extras which enhance the initial playing environment. A village module, due for release in the New Year, will allow you to take a character into the world outside the dungeon. It'll be possible to trade articles from your character's inventory for objects in the village — weapons and charms may be purchased, for instance, and then taken into the dungeon to make life easier on the quest.

And there's no reason why a character run by one person can't be pitted against someone else's *Swords and Sorcery* persona — an arena module is on the drawing board which should allow two people to load their characters into a common environment and slug it out! The definitive answer to those "my character's tougher than yours" arguments. These add-on modules will cost less than £5.00 each, so should be within every player's financial grasp.

All this variety is made possible by the MIDAS system, under which the initial module, *Swords and Sorcery*, was written. In the basic game, you have three dungeon levels to explore. No less than forty eight different monsters lurk round comers and hide in rooms. Each monster has its own particular characteristics, strengths and weaknesses — and it is up to you to decide whether to fight or flee when you come across one of the dungeon's animate inhabitants.

It's a captivating game, which can be played in a number of ways — going on a monster hunt for example, or entering the dungeon with a view to improving your character's skills in a specific area, perhaps magic-using are just two possible approaches. There's always the lure of that priceless armour ... Our Mr Brewster was well impressed with the game — it's a SMASH this issue, at any rate — "and no mistake!"

For fun, we'd like you to design a monster that might be found round a corner in *Swords and Sorcery*. Top prize in the monster-designing stakes is a real laser disk based video game — *Dragon's Lair* — an ideal means of filling those little awkward moments in between games of *Swords*. Twenty five runners up are going to win their very own PSS Goodie Bag, too, containing software, posters, badges — the usual range of nice things to impress your friends with.

What you have to do is design (create?) a monster. A totally original (and probably very nasty) monster that hasn't appeared anywhere else before, except in your imagination. Send us a description of its appearance, attributes, weaknesses (if any), character, magic using abilities and general temperament. If you really want to round off your entry, a picture of the beast might be an idea



— if you can bear to actually commit its form to parchment.

To give just a little taste of the kind of monster we mean, here's a couple of thumbnail sketches taken from the *Swords and Sorcery* manual:

DEVIL MAGE: A Devil Mage is a powerful magic-using devil called up from the Abyss. Devil Mages avoid hand to hand combat, preferring to blow their victims apart from a sensible distance. Not even remotely harmless.

GORGONS: In Greek mythology, Medusa and her sisters were Gorgons with the ability to turn those who viewed them into stone. Being turned to stone is ever-so-slightly fatal. As a rule, avoid Gorgons — unless you want to be stoned.

REVENANT GUARDIANS: These unfortunate creatures were once adventurers like yourself. They have been bound into perpetual service as guardians, and though their flesh has long since rotted away, their powers remain strong. Beware, lest this happens to you!

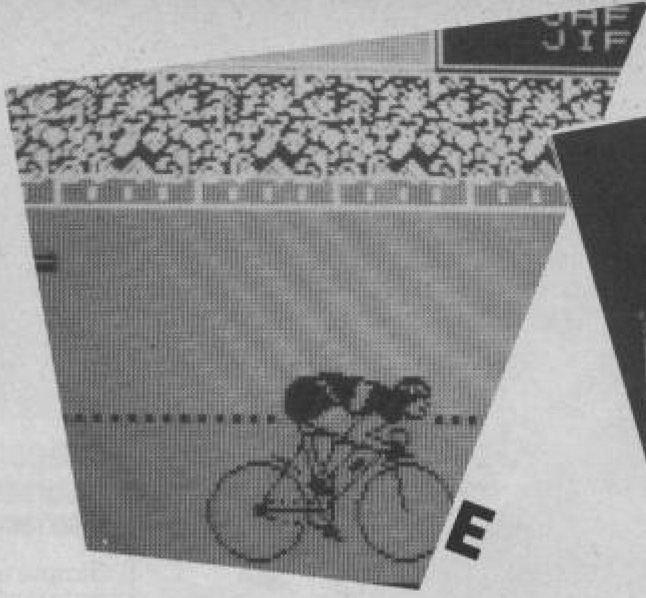
Now, these little pencil portraits are very short, pithy and to the point — when it comes to describing nearly fifty monsters in a game manual, there's not much room to go into anything more than the salient details. Go into as much detail as you like, within reason, when it comes to describing **your** monster.

Good luck, don't get too frightened while you work on your entry and make sure it arrives at SWORDS AND SORCERY COMPETITION, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB by or before 30th January 1986. And don't even dream about cheating. We've got a copy of "OUT OF THE PIT", the Fighting Fantasy Monster-ography. It'll be reviewed along with your creations, probably in the March Issue.

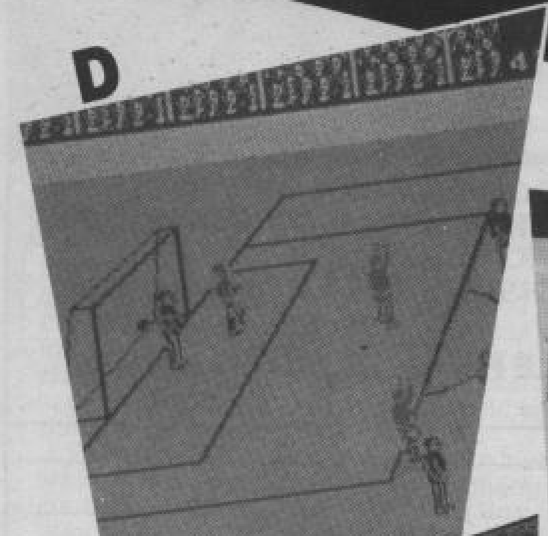
Crash Competition

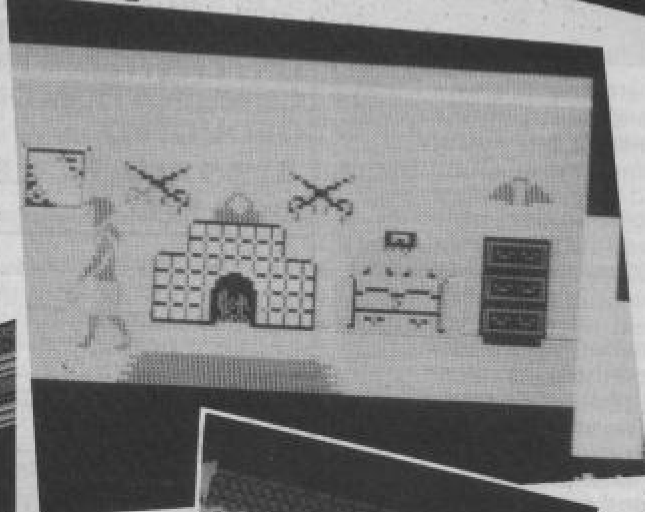
PLAY NAME THAT GAM… AND… A…

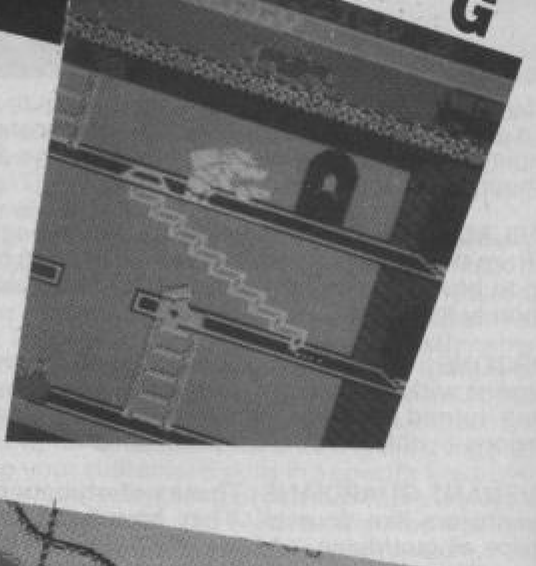
SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT OCEAN SOFTWARE?

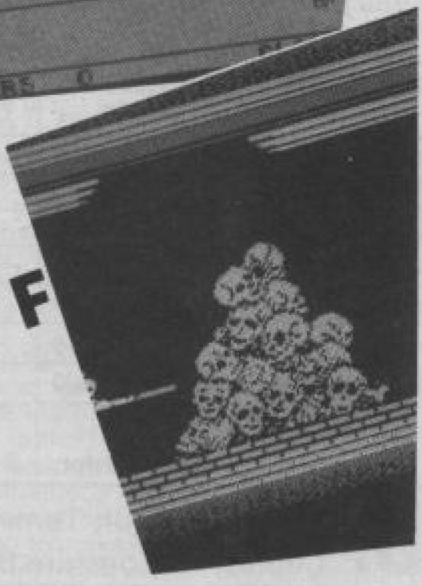

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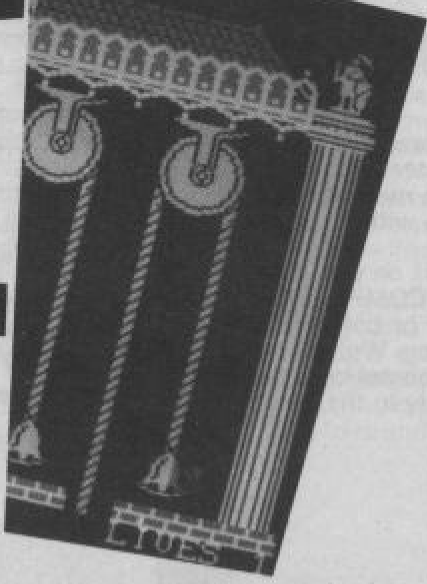

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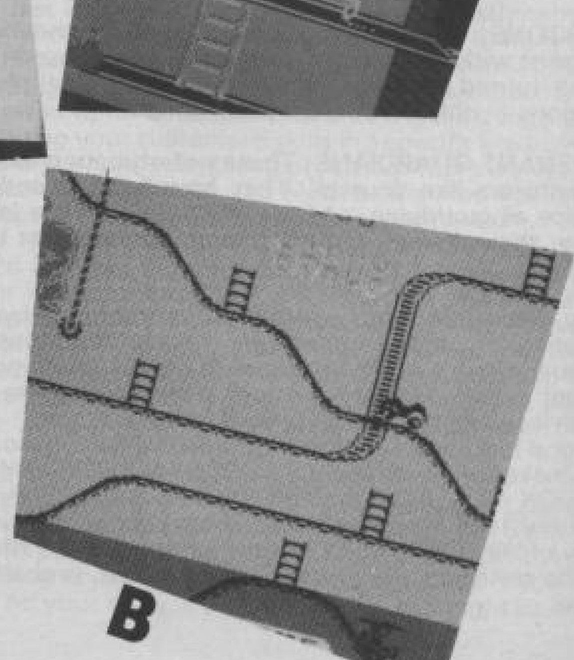

D


A


G


F


H


B

A Chance to Complete Your Collection of Ocean's 1985 Premier Cru Vintage Games

E WIN AN OCEAN GOODIE BAG

To test your awareness of Spectrum Software in General — and Ocean Software in the very particular — we've assembled screen shots from the Eight Ocean Games released in 1985. All you have to do is identify them. Easy Huh?

Well, we thought it was a bit TOO easy, really, so we've complicated matters a little bit. What we've gone and done is messed round with the photies a little bit — you haven't quite got the full picture to play with, as they say. (*Heaven knows who THEY are, but we'll leave that question for another competition shall we?* — Comps Minion)

If you can identify all eight Ocean games from the fragmented photies presented here, you could complete your collection of Ocean Games — you can choose one of the eight games on these pages and if you win, you'll receive it totally free of charge. Five particularly lucky persons will also win their game inside an Ocean Goodie Bag — a tasteful sports/computer bag that will make you the envy of your friends. And who knows, the chaps at Ocean might feel moved to pop a few extra goodies in, by way of a 1986 surprise!

Pore over the pictures, flip through your Back Issue collection if you're really stumped, and work out the names of the games. Jot them down on the entry form, next to the identifying letters and then, so we know which one of the eight games you'd like, ring round the game of your choice. Add your name and address, put the form in an envelope, cook on a low oven for around twenty minutes and.. OOPS. in an envelope, stick a stamp on it and despatch with all haste to OCEAN COMP, CRASH TOWERS, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

Get the eight names right, get the entry form into the special cardboard box before 30th Jan 1986 and you could be a SPOT THE GAME Winner. Off you go now . . .

I'M PLAYING OCEAN SPOT THE GAME

I've worked out the names of the games and have written them ever-so-neatly against the letters below, which correspond to the piccies. AND I've ringed my choice of prize.

A ....

B ....

C ....

D ....

E ....

F ....

G ....

H ....

My Nameipoos is: ....

AND I LIVE AT ....

....

....

.... **POST CODE** ....

THEIR ONLY HOPE WAS YOUR PROMISE TO BRING THEM BACK ALIVE...

BEACH-HEAD II



The continuing saga pits allied forces against the cruel dictator who escaped the destruction of the fortress with remnants of his army and prisoners captured during the land battle.

Produced for the COMMODORE 64 and coming to a computer store near you!

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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



This is a slightly shorter version of the Forum in order to fit in a BUG BOX special by PAUL MALLINSON from Doncaster, whose comic strip 'The Day the Bugs took over at CRASH and ZZAP!' impressed me no end when it turned up earlier in the year. Some of its contents have become out of date due to changes in the ZZAP! editorial team, but the general story still holds good — and I'm flattered!
Instead of kicking off with the Letter of the Month, the writer of which receives £20 worth of software of their choice, don't forget, this month it is the second one in, because of the way they flow!

NOT LLOYD'S FAULT

Dear Lloyd,
I have been reading CRASH since the June 85 issue and I would like to say a few words on your magazine. First, I would like to point out that this letters section is for everybody. Most readers do not want to read about thirteen year-old school boys called Mark Jagasia (no offence). We do not want to read about CRASH making an error on *Dambusters* by putting 633 instead of 617. Now come on CRASH readers, pull yourselves together. Let's make a fresh start in the January issue. There, there Lloyd, I know it wasn't your fault.
Secondly, your reviews. I would like to say that they are great. Keep it up. Overall Lloyd, I think the mag is really, really terrific and I shall always buy it, no matter what the price.
Michael Handy, Tyne & Wear

Thanks Michael, it's nice to know there are still a few loyal fans out there, who appreciate my hard work!
Unlike the NEXT reader . . .
LM

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE EX-MARKETING MINION

Oh woe is me! I have failed you, oh CRASH readers, and this will mean spending Christmas on the CRASH Gibbet, enduring all sorts of unpleasantries, like being forced to watch Gary Liddon eat juicy slugs and being made to listen to Klaus Wunderlich and his amazing organ. Oli the Merciless is aptly named.
There's no fabaroonie subscription offer this month, for you to spend your Christmas Pennies on, you see. Oh dear. I'm in trouble.
Fear not, though, folks. Once I've listened to the collected works of Klaus (not Santa Klaus, sadly) I will get to work and attempt to make amends by presenting you with a truly wonderous deal to start the New Year with. So don't rush off and spend all you loot until you've seen what's on offer in our February issue. Which you'll be able to get at the end of January 1986.
And for all you disappointed peoples, still waiting for *Street Hawk*, which you ordered ages and ages ago, here's some news: Auntie Aggie assures me that she should be receiving the game from Ocean by the end of this year. If you can't stand waiting any longer, give her a ring on 0584 5620 and she'll let you know the titles of the games you can have as an alternative.
Ho hum. It's off to the Gibbet. Think of me, while you're opening your pressies and eating Christmas Pud. I don't expect I'll even get a stray slug from Mr Liddon's supply. He's soooo greedy!
See y'all in 1986, and have a happy festive wotsit.

GET IT TOGETHER

Mangram:
Three cheers on making a complete hash of the last few issues of CRASH, reducing Forum to the level of such trivia as the late lamented *Big K*. Way back in the good old days of Angus Ryall and the Terminal Man, before Roger Kean became 'Publishing Executive', you used to complain about not having enough space to print our letters (presumably why my letter never got printed).
Now the amount of Spectrum software being released is tailing off, you apparently have too much space and some bungling minion has decided to fill it with the pathetic Bug Box. This reader seems to recall that the original Oli-bugs were small pictures, tastefully drawn by a good artist and designed to liven up the Forum and to break up the text into smaller, more readable blocks, alleviating the boredom of reading pages totally filled with text. Perhaps the idea was to make Bug Box like this but the intention was surely not for it to take its present form — namely, a load of infantile bull . . .
Any halfwit three year old with a crayon could reproduce some of the 'pictures' in your pages — even you could do it. Also, the so called cartoons about 'Life at CRASH' are drawn by a load of infants who think they are really amazing guys who know everybody on the CRASH team and have the right to mouth off at them, pretending to be on familiar terms. These cartoons aren't funny, just foolish and immature.
Also I cannot compliment you on your choice of letters — 'Electro Bop', *Knight Lore/Alien 8* controversy and the wombats who write 'funny' letters (most of which are just rubbish).
Now Lloyd, you cannot wriggle out of this by saying you just print what we send in — it's you who decides which of the letters actually go to print. Okay, after all the abuse, here are some suggestions as to how to solve the problems. Ban Bug Box and get Oli back on the job. Print more letters like David Slater's in the November ish. What about cutting out a lot of the trivia by printing a photo of yourself. This may reduce your status as an enigmatic figure but would reduce the number of silly letters and cartoons.
If CRASH continues on this decline, it is in danger of losing a reader. That may not seem like much to you but I assure you there must be many others like me who feel the same way. If you're not careful, you could end up with a small readership composed mainly of the 8-12 age group.
Tom Buchanan, Aberdeenshire

There's some good points there, Tom, and No, I won't wriggle out. It IS true, however, that the Forum does tend to rely on the content of what's sent in — that's only fair. I would like to hear what other readers think of these points. As for BUG BOX, I must say that some of the stuff has been very good, I think anyway, and I hope you think this month's cartoon is actually worthy of being printed. Over to you Tom (and that's one letter you have got printed and what's more, I thought it was interesting enough to be this month's letter of the month — software on its way)! Tom isn't alone in his thoughts however . . .
LM

RIDICULOUS, PETTY COMMENTS

Dear Sir,
I am writing to your magazine for the second time to tell you what I and many of my friends think about your Forum. I think it's the most interesting part of the magazine because I like to hear what other people think about the magazine and about the computer market as a whole. But I also feel that people write some really silly letters as well. For instance, some moan about small printing errors or whether *Ghostbusters* is good or not. This is a matter of opinion and the whole universe does not want to know. I also think that the petty comments on whether Lloyd Mangram is better than Robin Candy are ridiculous. Every mag makes mistakes and even CRASH is not perfect. All these letters take up a lot of space and spoil the Forum somewhat.
Another point I would like to make is about software piracy. Some software companies are making it very difficult to copy ▶



their games. Although this poses few problems for the home copier, who can spend time on one game, it must cause many more mistakes on the big time crooks' mass copiers. Incidentally, a certain high street store does not allow their games to be tested. They do however, let you buy the game, take it home and as long as you have the receipt, take the game back and get a refund. Surely this makes it difficult for those who need the game only for an evening in order to copy it? Although they might get suspicious after a while.

I would also like to point out that the Adventure International advertisement in the November ish is extremely misleading. It says *Gremlins* is a Smash but the June review says nothing of the sort! It also claims that *Robin of Sherwood* is a Smash when, to my knowledge, is has not even been reviewed yet.
Sean Crossan, Cambridge

I confess to being surprised at how many readers do concern themselves about whether I'm better than Robin Candy or not — there's no argument after all — I'm better. You weren't the only reader to wonder about the Adventure International ads, Sean . . .
LM

Dear Lloyd,
Adventure International are stretching the truth just a bit. In CRASH 22 page 130 the advert for *Gremlins* labels it with a CRASH SMASH award, but Derek, although he liked it only gave it seven out of ten. *Robin of Sherwood* was indeed a SMASH but was not a ZZAP! SIZZLER as the advert would have us believe. Both these awards are thought to be about the ultimate in reviewing marks and they act as a great influence on whether or not to buy. Whilst both the games are very good, surely AI shouldn't be allowed to do this?
Anthony Bailey, Carshalton, Surrey.

The Ad International business is a bit of a mystery to me, although it's true that they were told that Robin of Sherwood *was a Smash — the reviews were completed in between issue dates and they got that into their next ad rather fast. How did it happen then?*
As to the Mangram/Candy type letters — well, here's another . . .
LM

SUSSED!

Dear Lloyd,
You may be able to fool some of us most of the time, most of us some of the time, but you can't fool all of us all of the time. You see, Mangram, we've got you sussed. You're no overworked underpaid superstar. You're not even called Mangram.

Yes Lloyd, you're that world famous con-man, Ivor Disguisor. With your millions of disguises, you could pass yourself off as anyone you wanted to. You've been trying to rule the world for years, haven't you Mangram? They say Hitler is dead but they never did find his body, did they?

Now you have a new plan. You've led us along for almost two years but you have been sussed at last. Every CRASH Smash was written by you. Every game written by someone else was written off. Now you have got everyone playing your games, they can't stop. All you need to do is stop making these games and stop writing CRASH and Britain will be yours. Soon the rest of the world will follow and your ambition will have been achieved.

Well, I'm going to stop you. Ha! Yes, I too can disguise myself and I've found out all your secrets. You see, I am Robin Candy. I print tips and pokes so that your games can be finished. I too wish to rule the world and I will.

Of course I am open to bribes. For *Scooby Doo* and *Robin of the Wood*, you can have Australia, China and Russia. If you decide to throw in *Hypersports* too, we'll let you have America. If you keep printing your brill mag, you can have Ludlow — if you're lucky. I'm waiting for your reply.
Neil Commins, Stockport, Cheshire

Actually I did write a game once. It was a huge maze game, and I wrote it in BASIC on a ZX81 using PRINT AT statements for the block graphics. Jolly good it was too, Franco Frey did the movement routines for me to guide my little hero (an X) around the maze. But you can't fool me, I know you're not Robin Candy because your spelling is too good.
LM

ASTRO WHAT?

Dear Lloyd,
How on Earth can Hewson Consultants be serious by launching such rubbish? I am of course, referring to *Astro-Clone*. I had bought *Avalon* and *Dragontorc* previously and found them to be entertaining and excellent. So after reading your review of *Astro-clone* I went out and bought it. I wondered why you had not given it a Crash Smash. When I loaded it, I found out. The game was a terrible disappointment. The 'Defender' screen was so frustrating, I could barely look at it. After taking the Valium, I loaded it again, hoping that the screen might just be a bug in the program. I just can't believe that a game with such a brilliant title screen and excellent predecessors can be such a hair-tearing, nail-biting pile of machine code. Maybe I'm over-reacting but when I had finished the game I was a nervous wreck.

I spent a whole twenty minutes trying to find the so called Seiddab cruisers and when I did find one, it was only a fleeting glimpse because I was instantly destroyed by the millions of asteroids, rockets, lasers and so on. I hate this game so far. I've played it sixteen times so far and maybe I'm useless but I only found a starbase twice and this is the worst bit. When you've docked in a starbase and you are in a room, it's really hard to see what you're doing because everything is the same colour and I found I was picking things up without realising it.

It's a great shame Steve Turner should write such a load of rubbish. Perhaps he should redesign the whole thing. Otherwise, I hope that Robin Candy prints some pokes to bypass the 'Defender' screen. Lastly, I would like to point out that your review of *Starquake* was slightly misleading. There are in fact fourteen teleports and not six as your review stated.
Neil Jackson, Kennington

I'm sorry to hear that you didn'tt aren't enjoy(ing) Astro Clone. *I have to admit to not playing it all that much myself, although I have watch the great RC whizzing around the place. The 'Defender' screens didn't seem as impossible as you describe, and I thought the starbase interiors were very good, especially with the control method employed. However, I would agree that the game isn't as wonderful as the* Avalon *duet. It's worth remembering that programmers, like anyone else, can be uneven in making things. But it's surely hardly deserving of the term 'rubbish'?*
LM

YOU'LL NEVER PRINT IT

Dear Lloyd,
I know there's no chance of this letter being printed because you make them all up. And you print all those letters bringing down Robin Candy while the rest of you get praise (mind you he deserves it). Anyway, to the reason why this letter won't get printed. The other day, I was thumbing through a copy of ZZAP! (forgive me) and to my horror discovered that w about you, like how old you are. You tell us nothing. Farewell, Lloyd. Keep looking behind you. Any



"What's that picture supposed to be?"

"Er, eye-catching, that's what it's supposed to be."

"But it doesn't tell you anything about the great new icon-driven Battle of Britain strategy game, THEIR FINEST HOUR, from Century Communications, publishers of THE FOURTH PROTOCOL. I mean, what's it got to do with using your skill and judgement to stem the almost inexorable advance of Goering's Luftwaffe? Does it tell you anything about the deployment of Spitfire squadrons and ack-ack batteries, the allocation of fresh pilots, or keeping in touch with the weather forecast? How about the daily reports you have to make to Winston Churchill, and the pulse rate feature where you control the speed of the game?

"Well, er ..."

"Right, we'd better hurry up and design a new ad before the game hits the streets on 9 December, and people start writing to and phoning Century Communications at 62-65 Chandos Place, London WC2N 4NW, Tel: 01-240 3411 and asking for copies."



THEIR FINEST HOUR

48K Spectrum

Their Finest Hour — a great strategy game simulating The Battle of Britain, by Nicholas Palmer and John Wilson. Published by Century Communications for the 48K Spectrum at £9.95.



day now and ...
Jason Ayres, Eynsham, Oxon

As a matter of fact I'm almost exactly twice Robin Candy's age, so there's one 'fact' — but I know you won't believe it. It wasn't the money lured me onto the ZZAP! pages — it was the promise of a much bigger desk (which I didn't get — never trust management), and I don't think I answer letters that slag the Spectrum in any favourable way. Would I do a thing like that, even for a bigger desk? Angus stopped writing for CRASH because he got a different 'day time' job at Games Workshop when they stopped doing computer software, and because he wanted to do more writing along the line of short stories and things — and yes, we might start printing some of our hi-scores, although you have to remember, we don't have time to get them — we're too busy looking at the next set of games!
LM

HYPOCRITES

Dear Lloyd,
What the hell is all this fuss about piracy? You want to stop piracy - no way! Simply because it remains too easy. Just look at the number of commercial copiers (whenever a new security device is invented, you can bet your microdrive there will be a new way to crack it). What you say about piracy will get nowhere while your magazine continues to carry the adverts for them. It just makes you look a hypocrite. Can't you see that? If magazines stopped printing these ads, it would help much more than just talking about it. Anyway, I'm sure someone else would buy the space.
S Mabley, Kings Lynn, Norfolk

I doubt very much whether us printing copier ads makes a jot of difference, and we aren't hypocrites — the ads are for microdrive facilities. Besides which all the arguments put forward in this column and any other in CRASH in the past (it's a subject I've tried to drop lately) have been about either the morality of piracy or the idiocy of helping to destroy an industry that provides entertainment. No one at CRASH has EVER suggested you can stamp out home copying — so perhaps you had better go back through CRASH and have a look at some of those old arguments.
LM

LOADING SCREEN$ PLEASE

Dear Lloyd,
Why don't you include shots of loading screens in your reviews as I am a great fan of loading screens and I really would like to see what they look like? If the game hasn't got one, then fair enough.
Stephen Henstead, Pemberton, Wigan

We often do put loading screens in the reviews, especially if they look good. Sometimes, however, it's a question of space allocation per review, and when using a loading screen might mean missing out a more useful game screen, then the choice falls in favour of the game screen. Another problem that sometimes arises is that though we may have a finished copy of a game, sometimes the review copies are missing the refinement of a loading screen.
LM

WHERE'S SCOOBY?

Dear CRASH,
What's happening? Are you cracking up because nothing new and exciting has been thrown at your desk for you to review. And you want to keep us interested in your great mag so we sit on the edge of our computer seats and tune in next month. If so, then you do not need to because I wouldn't trade CRASH for ZZAP! or anything else.

Anyway, in your *Scooby Doo* preview, you said that the game 'should be released at the end of October'. Well I looked in every computer shop for miles around, without result.

Finally, I phoned Elite who told me I would have to wait until January 6th of the new year before I could get my hands on it. So what did happen to the release dates you told thousands about. Were you given the wrong information, were there set backs at Elite or were you just wrong?
Garrie Deadman, Bellingham

No, we're not cracking up — at least I don't think so, though I'm a bit puzzled as to what you are referring. And no, we were not 'wrong' about Scooby. The article was very much an early preview and the hoped for release date was given as passed on to us, but it wasn't a firm release date. You can't have everything you know, Garrie. I mean we could stop doing previews if you'd rather ... No, of course you wouldn't. At time of writing, Scooby Doo *is expected any day.*
LM

THE PERFECT GAME

Dear Lloyd,
Here are a few of my views on what makes the perfect game. It should have an extensive playing area of at least 70 screens (my favourite game, *Starquake* has over 400 screens — quite an achievement for Bubble Bus). The game should have good graphics but not too detailed as this seems to make the colours clash quite repulsively. In this case, the best example seems to be *Dynamite Dan*. Lastly, the game should be addictive and fast — lack of speed was what really let *Popeye* down.
JP Morrow, West Denton, Newcastle upon Tyne

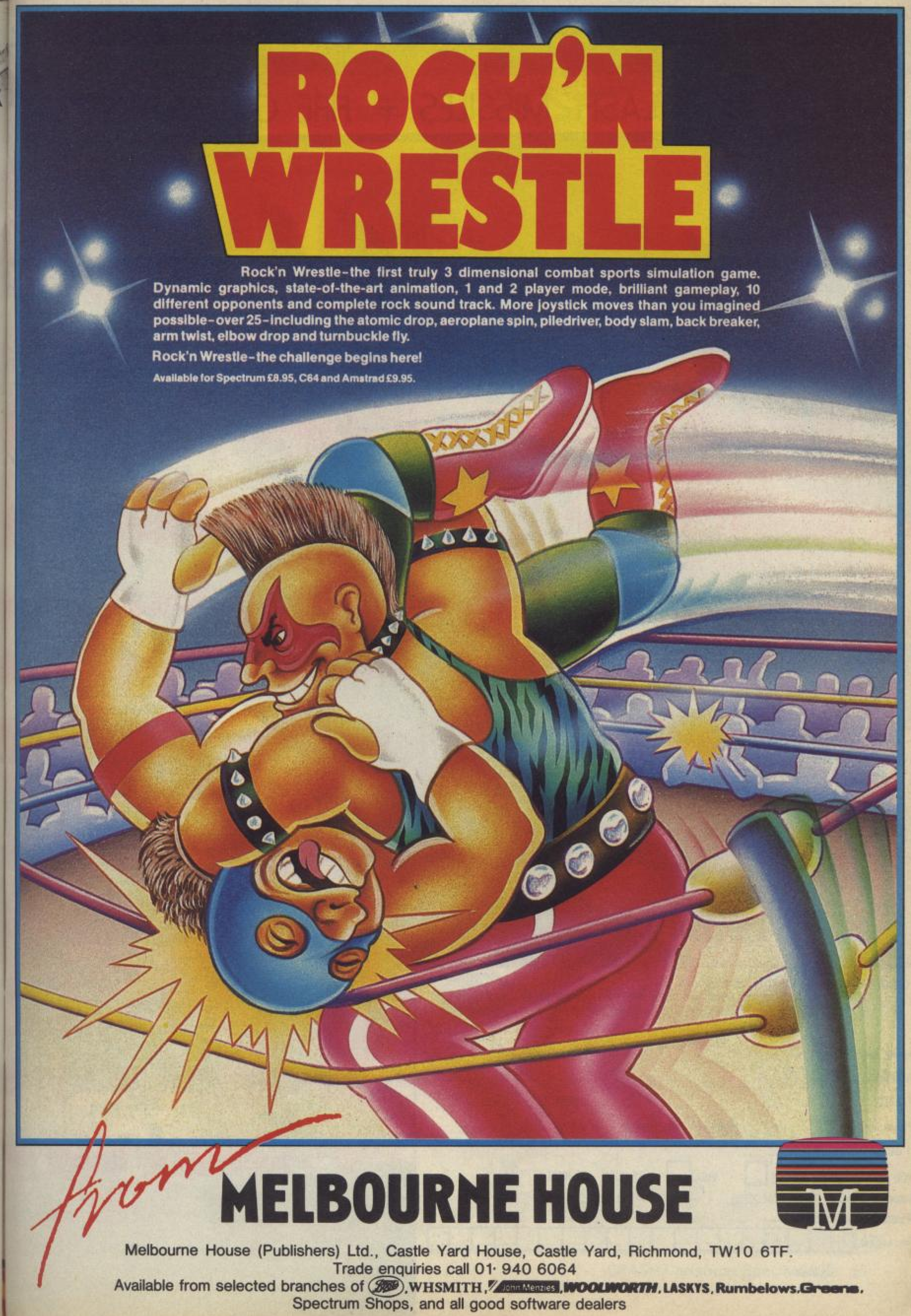
Anyone want to comment on that? It would be enjoyable to find out what CRASH readers really reckon makes the Perfect Game. let's hear.
LM

HYPOCRITES AGAIN

Dear Floyd,
Don't tell your cousin this but I think he's a hpyocrite. I am referring to Steve Johnson's letter in issue 21. He asked you to label the very best game in each issue and also have a 'Worst game of the month' award. You replied that it was better to just have a selection of good games and let the reader decide, according to his or her tastes. Why, in that case do you have a 'Gold Medal' in ZZAP! to distinguish games of superior quality? Also Steve suggested that rather than tagging a bad game's review with a disrespectful remark, you should let the review stand on its own. Why in ZZAP! is there a Tacky label which really brings down the game and software house concerned?
Matthew Parselle, Wilmslow, Cheshire

The answer is actually dead simple — I don't make up ZZAP! reviewing policy as regards Sizzlers, Gold Medals and the like, and I stick by my original words. The way ZZAP! works was set up first by its editor, Chris Anderson, when he came over from PCG magazine, and the Commodore readers obviously like the way that works.
LM

So much for the Christmas Special letters. I hope everyone enjoys the BUG BOX Special — I thought the ideas and drawing were well worth its large-scale inclusion. Back next month, indeed, next year with more from the pens of yourselves.



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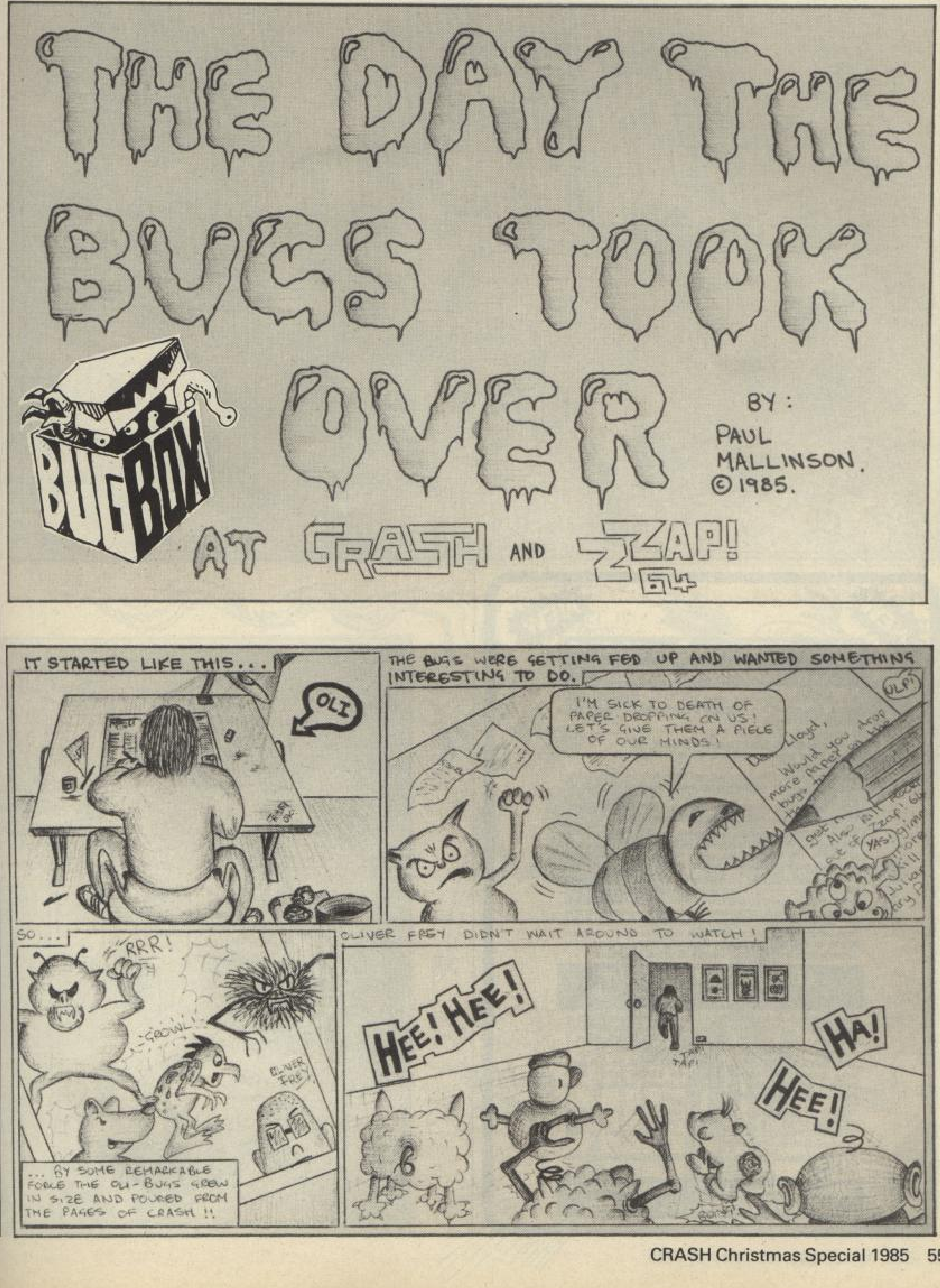
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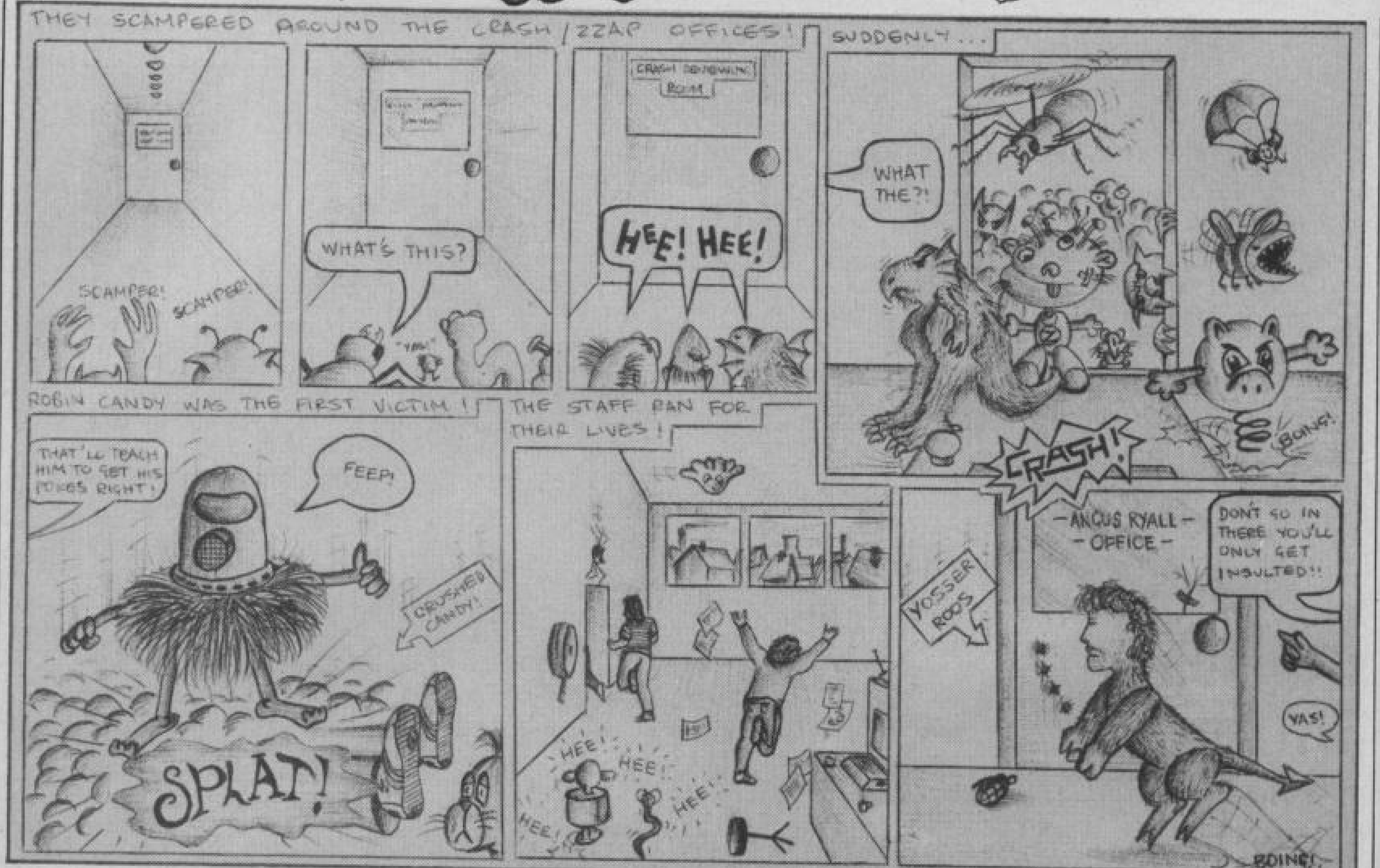
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THE DAY THE BUGS TOOK OVER
BUGBOX
BY: PAUL MALLINSON. © 1985.
AT CRASH AND ZZAP! 64
IT STARTED LIKE THIS...
OLI
THE BUGS WERE GETTING FED UP AND WANTED SOMETHING INTERESTING TO DO.
I'M SICK TO DEATH OF PAPER DROPPING ON US! LET'S GIVE THEM A PIECE OF OUR MINDS!
ULP!
YAS!
SO...
RRR!
GROWL!
OLIVER FREY
... BY SOME REMARKABLE FORCE THE OLI-BUGS GREW IN SIZE AND POURED FROM THE PAGES OF CRASH !!
OLIVER FREY DIDN'T WAIT AROUND TO WATCH!
HEE! HEE!
HA!
HEE!





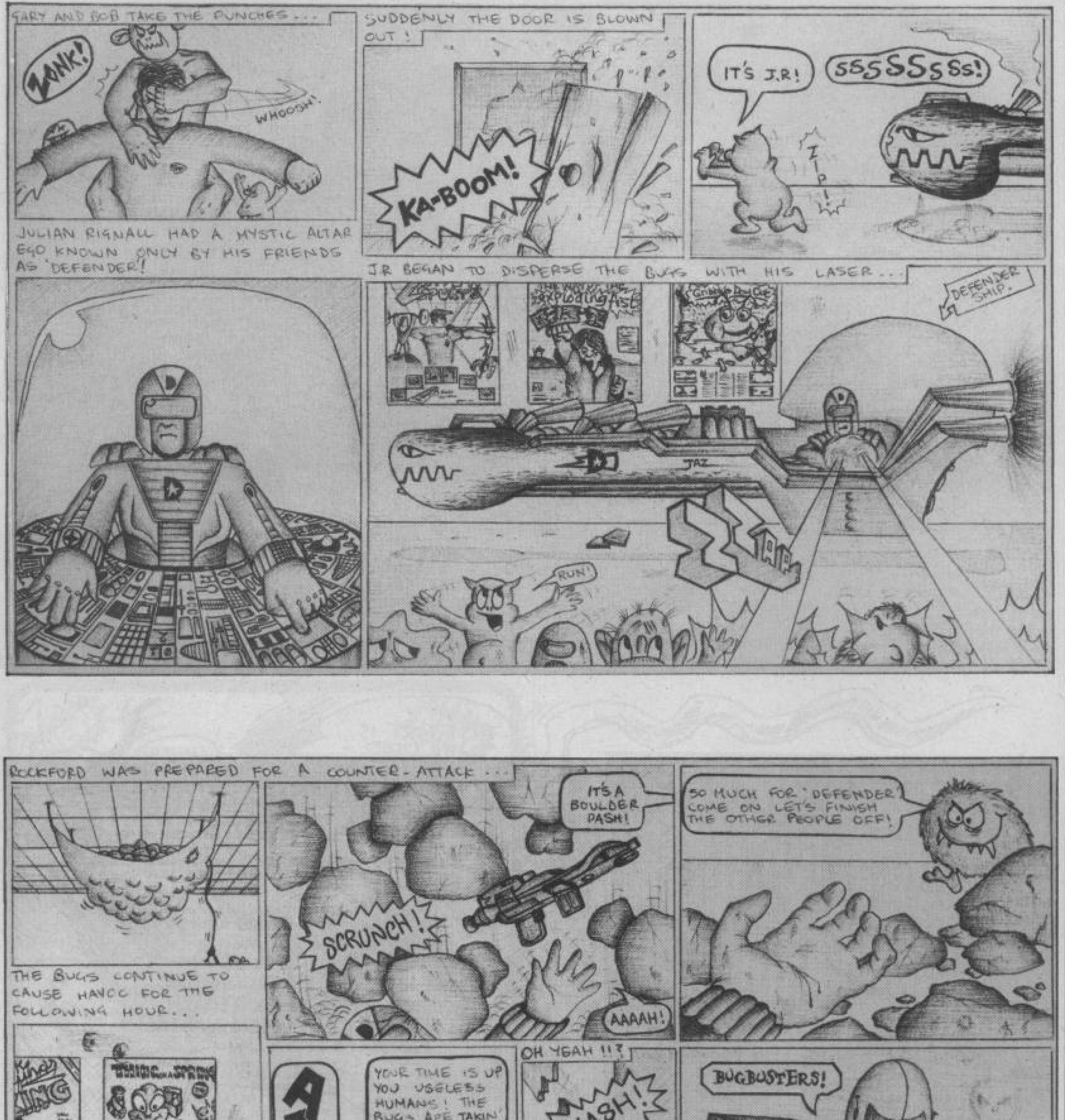
THEY SCAMPERED AROUND THE CRASH/ZZAP OFFICES!
SCAMPER!
SCAMPER!
WHAT'S THIS?
CRASH REVIEWING ROOM
HEE! HEE!
SUDDENLY...
WHAT THE?!
CRASH!
BOING!
ROBIN CANDY WAS THE FIRST VICTIM!
THAT'LL TEACH HIM TO GET HIS POKES RIGHT!
FEEP!
CRUSHED CANDY!
SPLAT!
THE STAFF RAN FOR THEIR LIVES!
HEE!
HEE!
HEE!
HEE!
YOSSER ROOS
- ANGUS RYALL - OFFICE -
DON'T GO IN THERE YOU'LL ONLY GET INSULTED!!
YAS!
BOING!



ONE BY ONE UNTIL MOST WERE GONE!
GRRROWL!
SNAP!
SNAP!
YAS!
CHRIS, JOHN AND BEN ARE NO MORE...
WHOOSH!
URG!
5 MINS
WOS


ROCKFORD !!!?
82%!! ITS BRILLIANT! I WANTED A GOLD MEDAL! I'LL GET YOU YET PENN!!
NOOO!
BOB AND GARY ARE COWERING BEHIND A TABLE...
ZOOM!
WHOOSH!
WHATS THE SITUATION ROCKFORD?
I KNOW J.R.S AN ACE AT DEFENDER BUT WHAT DOES HE MEAN?
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOODBY AND GOODNIGHT TO BOB AND GAZ!
"WELL I GOT CHRIS ANDERSON BUT RIGNALL DID A BUNK SHOUTING 'DEFENDER' OR SOMETHING!"
SIZZLER
CHRIS
NOW LOOK HERE! I'M FED UP WITH ALL THIS WAITIN', LET'S GIT THEM THAR REVIEWERS BEHIN' THAT THAR TABLE AN' DO 'EM OVER!!
YES!
HEY! WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?!
GET THE MORTALS!
EEK!
THERE GOES MATTHEW!
AARRGH!
BANG!
SPLURG!
THIS TIME THEY PEEKED AROUND THE DOOR AND LOOKED IN AMAZEMENT...
ZAP! 64 OFFICES
JEEZ!
THIS EFFORT IS QUITE GOOD - HE'LL PUT OUR OLI OUT OF WORK,,, - AND WHERE WILL WE BE THEN - HISS!
I'M OFF INTO THE NEXT YEAR FOLKS!
THEY'RE ME FRIENDS - BUT WHEN THE BOX OPENS IT FEELS LIKE FRIDAY THE
HELP!
BUGBOX





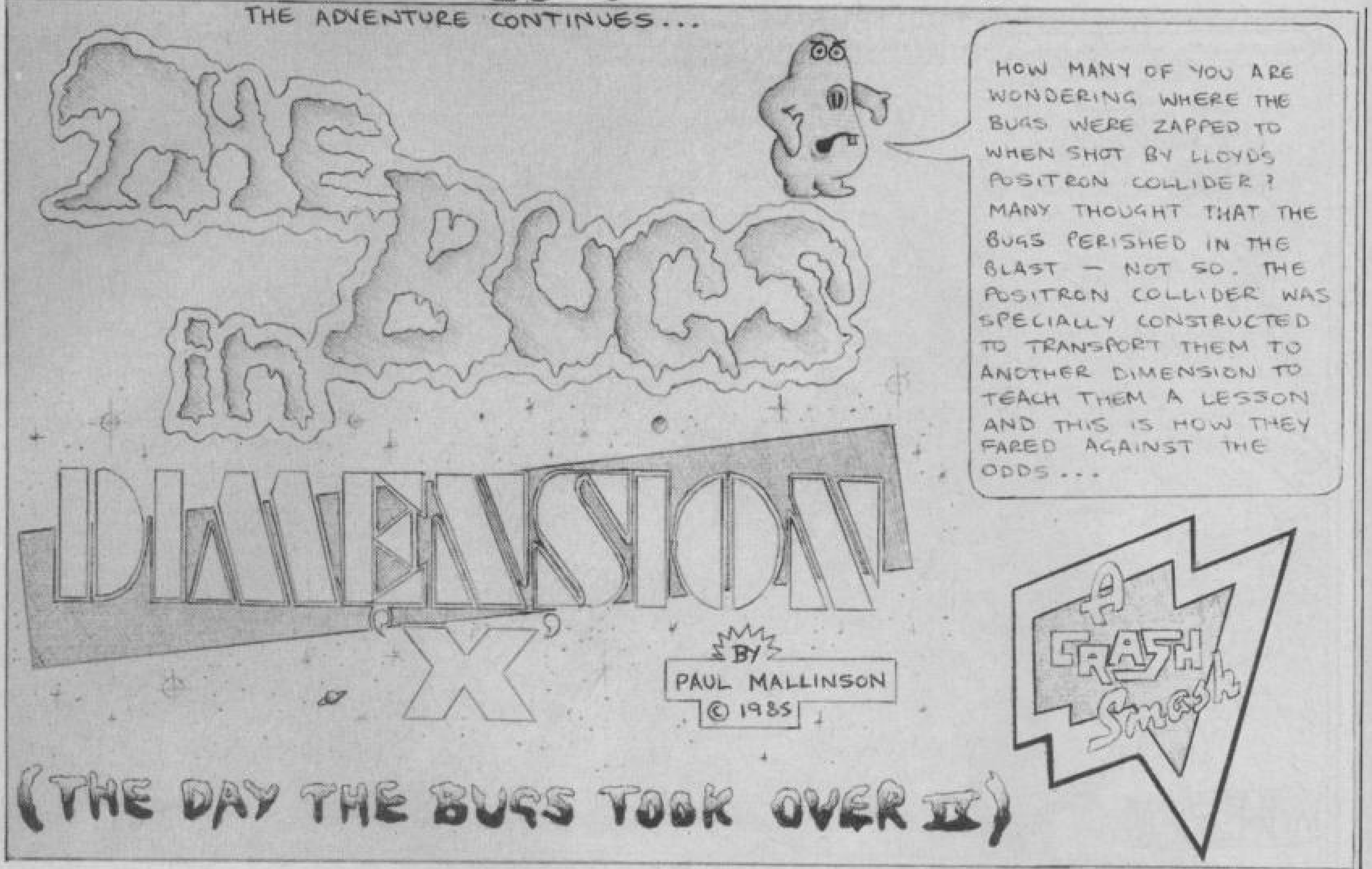
GARY AND BOB TAKE THE PUNCHES...
ZONK!
WHOOSH!
JULIAN RIGNALL HAD A MYSTIC ALTAR EGO KNOWN ONLY BY HIS FRIENDS AS 'DEFENDER'!
SUDDENLY THE DOOR IS BLOWN OUT!
KA-BOOM!
IT'S J.R!
SSSSSSSSs!
ZIP!
J.R BEGAN TO DISPERSE THE BUGS WITH HIS LASER...
DEFENDER SHIP.
RUN!
ROCKFORD WAS PREPARED FOR A COUNTER-ATTACK...
IT'S A BOULDER DASH!
SCRUNCH!
AAAAH!
SO MUCH FOR 'DEFENDER' COME ON LET'S FINISH THE OTHER PEOPLE OFF!
THE BUGS CONTINUE TO CAUSE HAVOC FOR THE FOLLOWING HOUR...
STOMP!
STOMP!
ATHEEE!
YOUR TIME IS UP YOU USELESS HUMANS! THE BUGS ARE TAKIN' OVER.
HA! HA! HA!
OH YEAH !!?
SMASH!
BUGBUSTERS!
IT'S MANGY MANGRAM!





HE'S GOT A POSITRON COLLIDERRR!
KRRRZZZT!
ONE BY ONE THE BUGS WERE FRAZZLED INTO OBLIVION...
KRRRZZZT!
LLOYD KNEW WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF THIS HAVOC.
ONE OF OUR TRUCKS CONTAINING RADIOACTIVE SLUDGE OVERTURNED AND CONTAMINATED A NEARBY RESERVOIR. WATER FROM THAT LAKE IS SENT ALL OVER SHROPSHIRE. WE MANAGED TO CUT IT OFF IN TIME. BUT SOME ESCAPED AND WE'VE TRACED IT TO THE ART ROOM AT THE CRASH OFFICES. OLIVER FREY COULD HAVE USED SOME TO DO SOME PAINTING OR DRAWING!!
CLIVE
THE LAST OF THE RIOTERS WAS SOON DEALT WITH...
YAARGHS!
KRRRZZZT!
POOR OLD RODGER KEAN WAS SITTING IN THE CORNER.
I'M RUINED!
PAUL SUMNER
FEEP!
BLEET!
BWA!
'SCUSE ME. BUT IS THIS THE ZZAP! / CRASH OFFICES? I'M THE NEW REVIEWER.
AFTER A WHILE RODGER DID RECOVER AND WENT ON TO EDIT BOTH MAGAZINES AGAIN. LLOYD GOT HIS PAYRISE AND JULIAN, ROB AND THE OTHERS SURVIVED AND CONTINUED TO WORK AS REVIEWERS, ETC.
... AS FOR THE BUGS - NOTHING WAS HEARD OF THEM AGAIN.... (EXCEPT ON THE PAGES OF CRASH!)
The End



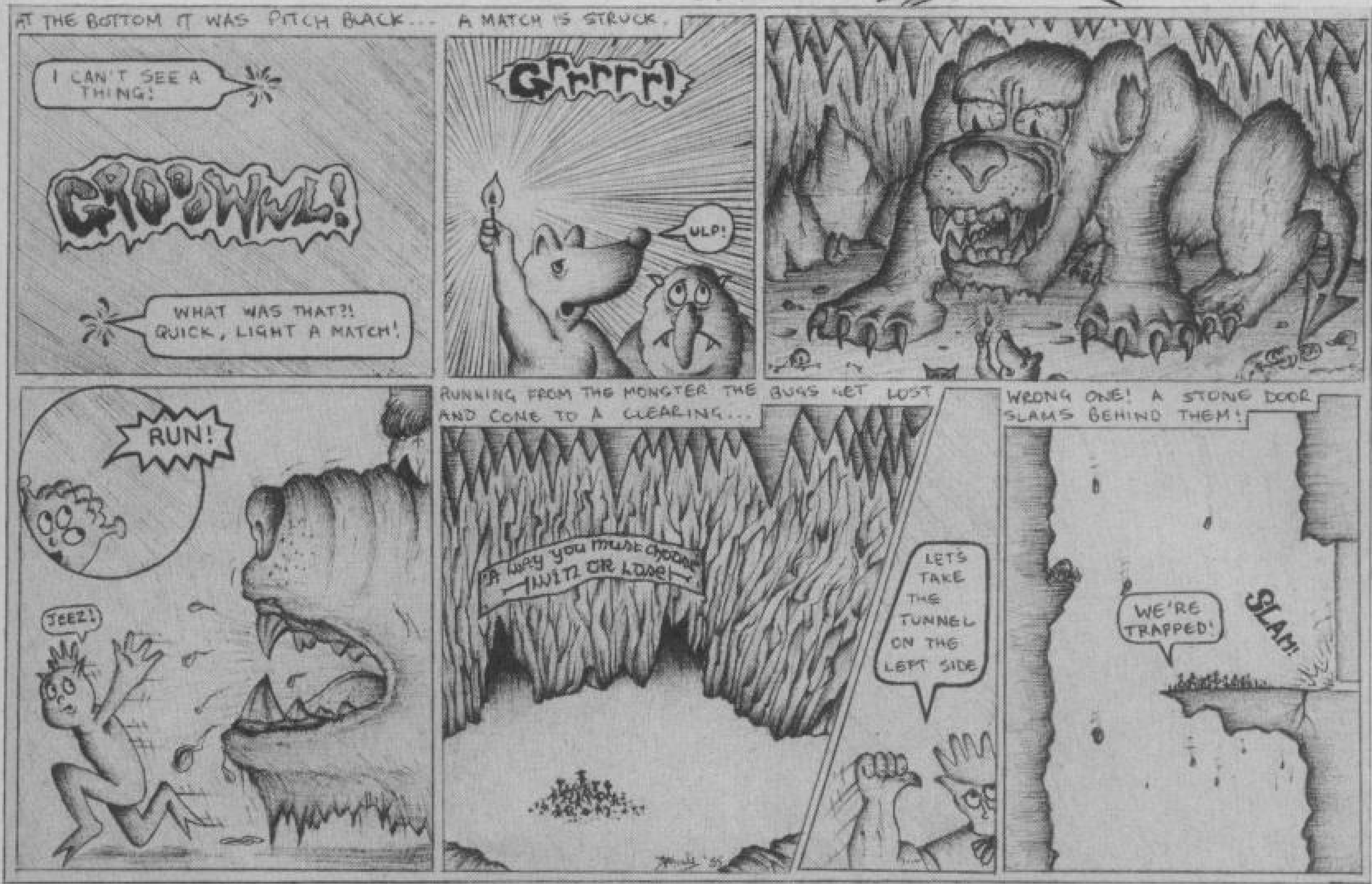


THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...
THE BUGS IN DIMENSION X
HOW MANY OF YOU ARE WONDERING WHERE THE BUGS WERE ZAPPED TO WHEN SHOT BY LLOYDS POSITRON COLLIDER? MANY THOUGHT THAT THE BUGS PERISHED IN THE BLAST — NOT SO. THE POSITRON COLLIDER WAS SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED TO TRANSPORT THEM TO ANOTHER DIMENSION TO TEACH THEM A LESSON AND THIS IS HOW THEY FARED AGAINST THE ODDS...
BY PAUL MALLINSON © 1985
A CRASH Smash
(THE DAY THE BUGS TOOK OVER IX)



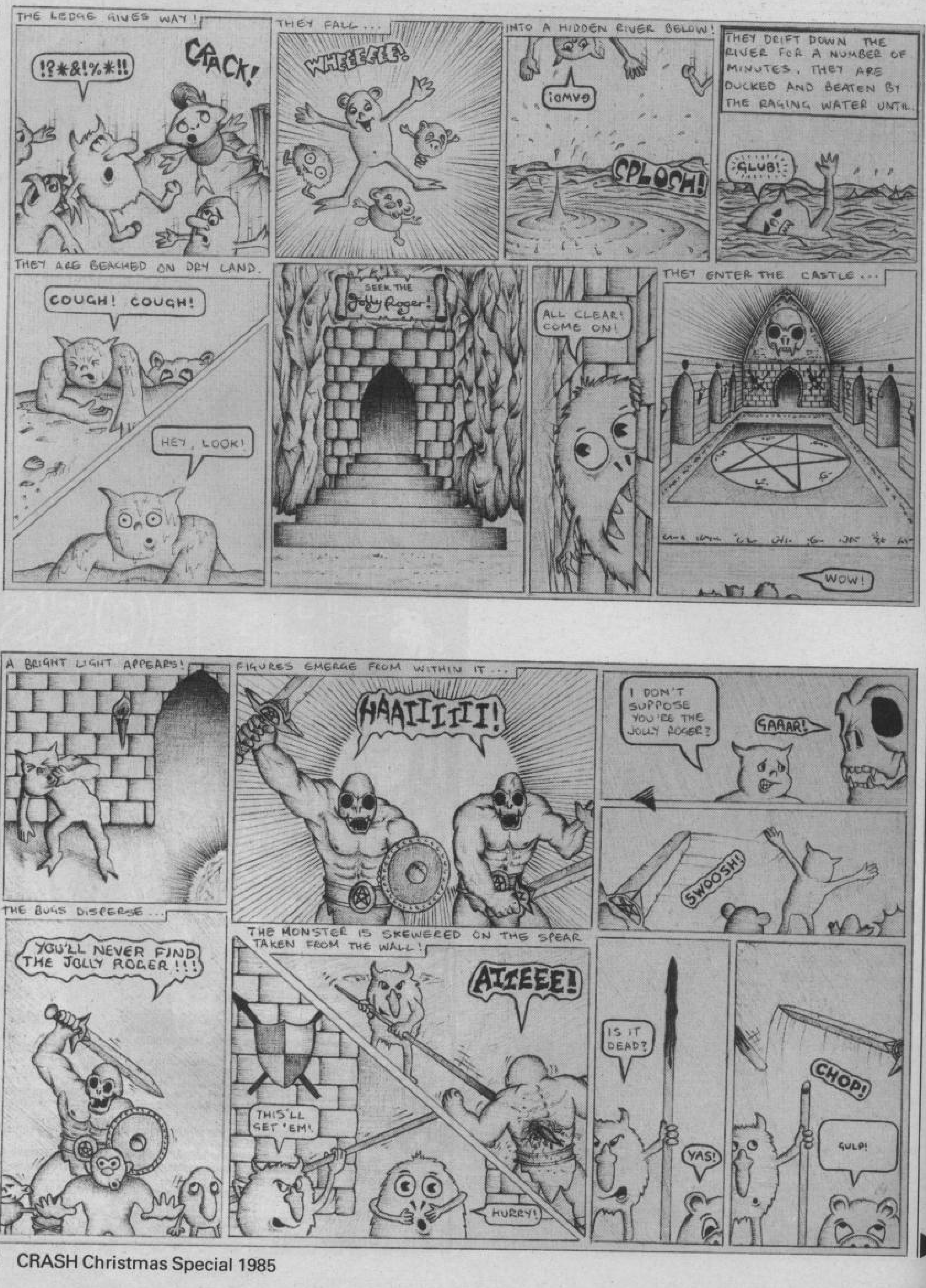
IT WAS A BLEAK AND WIERD LAND.
THEY QUICKLY READ THE SIGN...
WELCOME TO DIMENSION 'X' - THE LAND FOR DELINQUENT BUGS. YOUR QUEST IS TO ESCAPE THIS LAND BY REACHING THE CASTLE IN THE CENTRE OF THE WIERDPLAINS - FAIL AND YOU WILL BE DE-BUGGED!
WELL, GOLLY JEEPERS AND MERCY ME!
WOTSIT?
DUNNO!




AT THE BOTTOM IT WAS PITCH BLACK...
I CAN'T SEE A THING!
GROOOWWL!
WHAT WAS THAT?! QUICK, LIGHT A MATCH!
A MATCH IS STRUCK.
GRrrrr!
ULP!
RUN!
JEEZ!
RUNNING FROM THE MONSTER THE BUGS GET LOST AND COME TO A CLEARING...
A WAY YOU MUST CHOOSE WIN OR LOSE!
LET'S TAKE THE TUNNEL ON THE LEFT SIDE
WRONG ONE! A STONE DOOR SLAMS BEHIND THEM!
WE'RE TRAPPED!
SLAM!

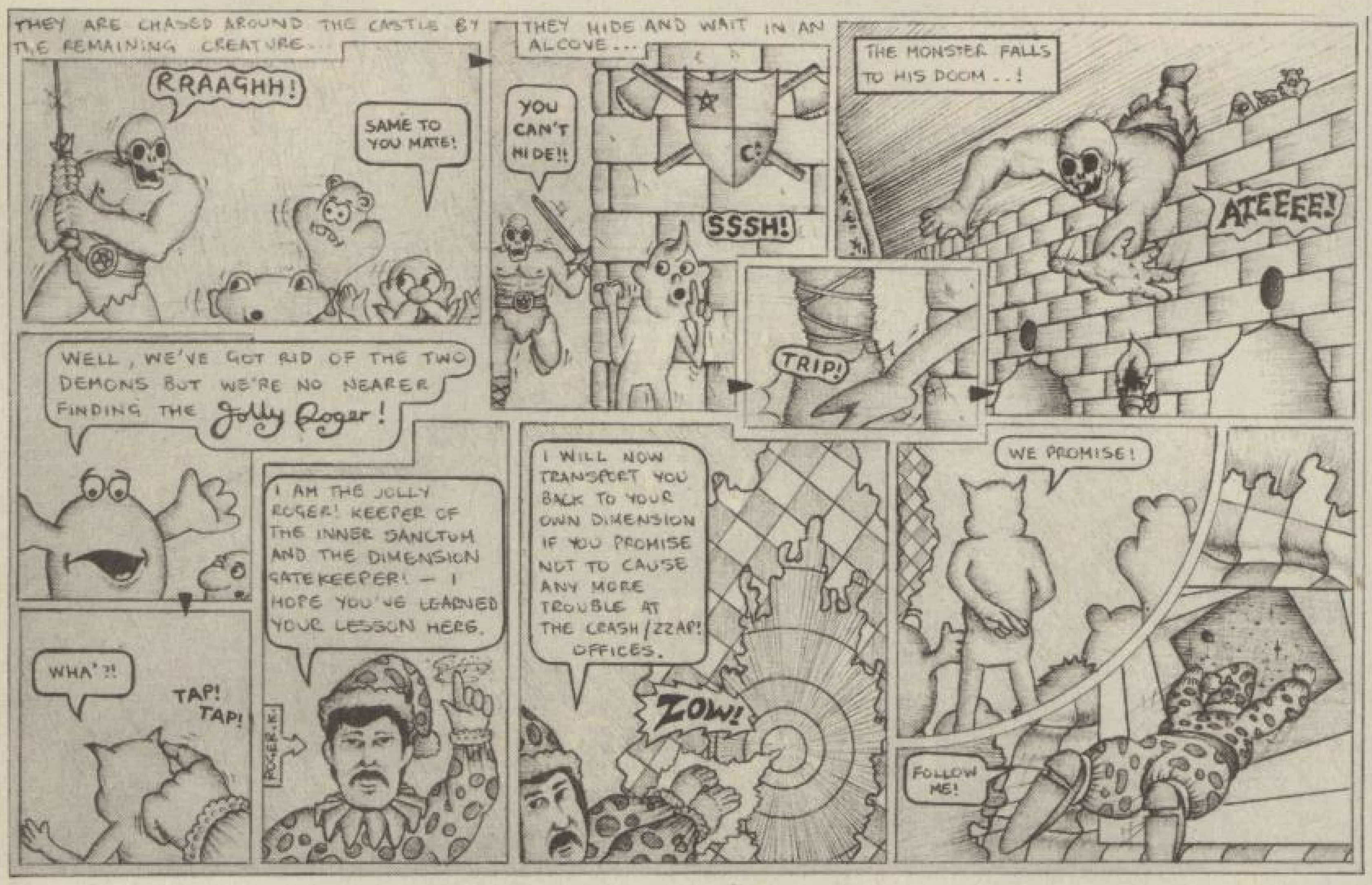

WHERE ARE WE?! OVER THERE — A SIGN!
PING!
COME ON!
WALKED AND WALKED...
UNTIL...
ARGHH!
whoosh!
THE GROUND OPENED BENEATH THEM!





THE LEDGE GIVES WAY!
!?*&!%*!!
CRACK!
THEY FALL...
WHEEEEEE!
INTO A HIDDEN RIVER BELOW!
SPLOSH!
THEY DRIFT DOWN THE RIVER FOR A NUMBER OF MINUTES. THEY ARE DUCKED AND BEATEN BY THE RAGING WATER UNTIL...
GLUB!
THEY ARE BEACHED ON DRY LAND.
COUGH! COUGH!
HEY, LOOK!
SEEK THE Jolly Roger!
ALL CLEAR! COME ON!
THEY ENTER THE CASTLE...
WOW!
A BRIGHT LIGHT APPEARS!
FIGURES EMERGE FROM WITHIN IT...
HAAIIIIII!
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'RE THE JOLLY ROGER?
GAAAR!
SWOOSH!
THE BUGS DISPERSE...
YOU'LL NEVER FIND THE JOLLY ROGER!!!
THE MONSTER IS SKEWERED ON THE SPEAR TAKEN FROM THE WALL!
AIIEEE!
THIS'LL GET 'EM!
HURRY!
IS IT DEAD?
YAS!
CHOP!
GULP!




THEY ARE CHASED AROUND THE CASTLE BY THE REMAINING CREATURE...
RRAAGHH!
SAME TO YOU MATE!
THEY HIDE AND WAIT IN AN ALCOVE...
YOU CAN'T HIDE!!
SSSH!
THE MONSTER FALLS TO HIS DOOM..!
TRIP!
ATEEEE!
WELL, WE'VE GOT RID OF THE TWO DEMONS BUT WE'RE NO NEARER FINDING THE Jolly Roger!
WHA'?!
TAP! TAP!
I AM THE JOLLY ROGER! KEEPER OF THE INNER SANCTUM AND THE DIMENSION GATEKEEPER! — I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED YOUR LESSON HERE.
ROGER K.
I WILL NOW TRANSPORT YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN DIMENSION IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO CAUSE ANY MORE TROUBLE AT THE CRASH/ZZAP! OFFICES.
ZOW!
WE PROMISE!
FOLLOW ME!


THE BUGS HURTLE THROUGH TIME AND SPACE...
PSYCHEDELIC MAN!
INTO THE BUG BOX!
THE BUGS ARRIVE BACK WITH A BANG!
IT SURE IS GOOD TO BE BACK HOME.
The End

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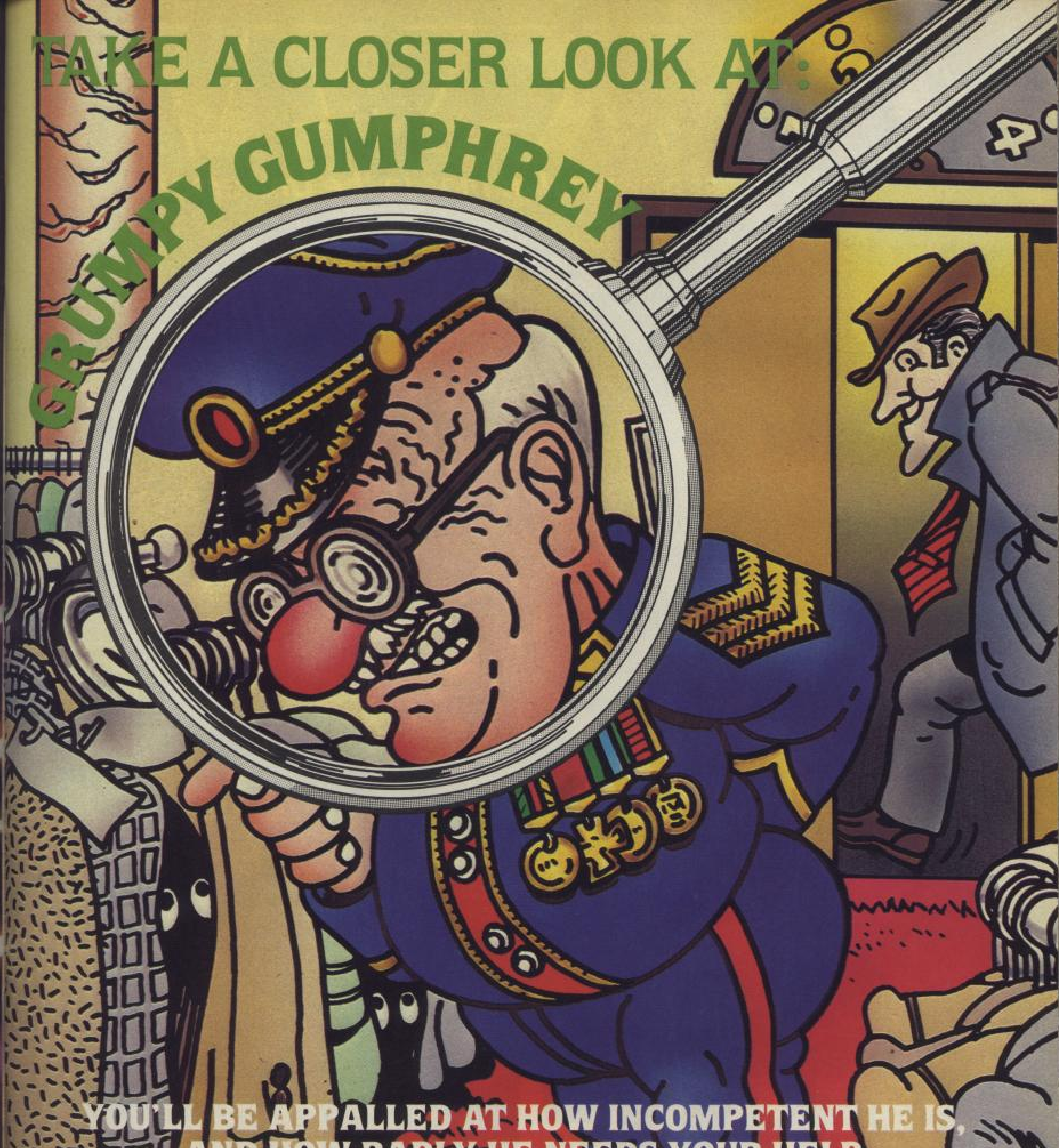
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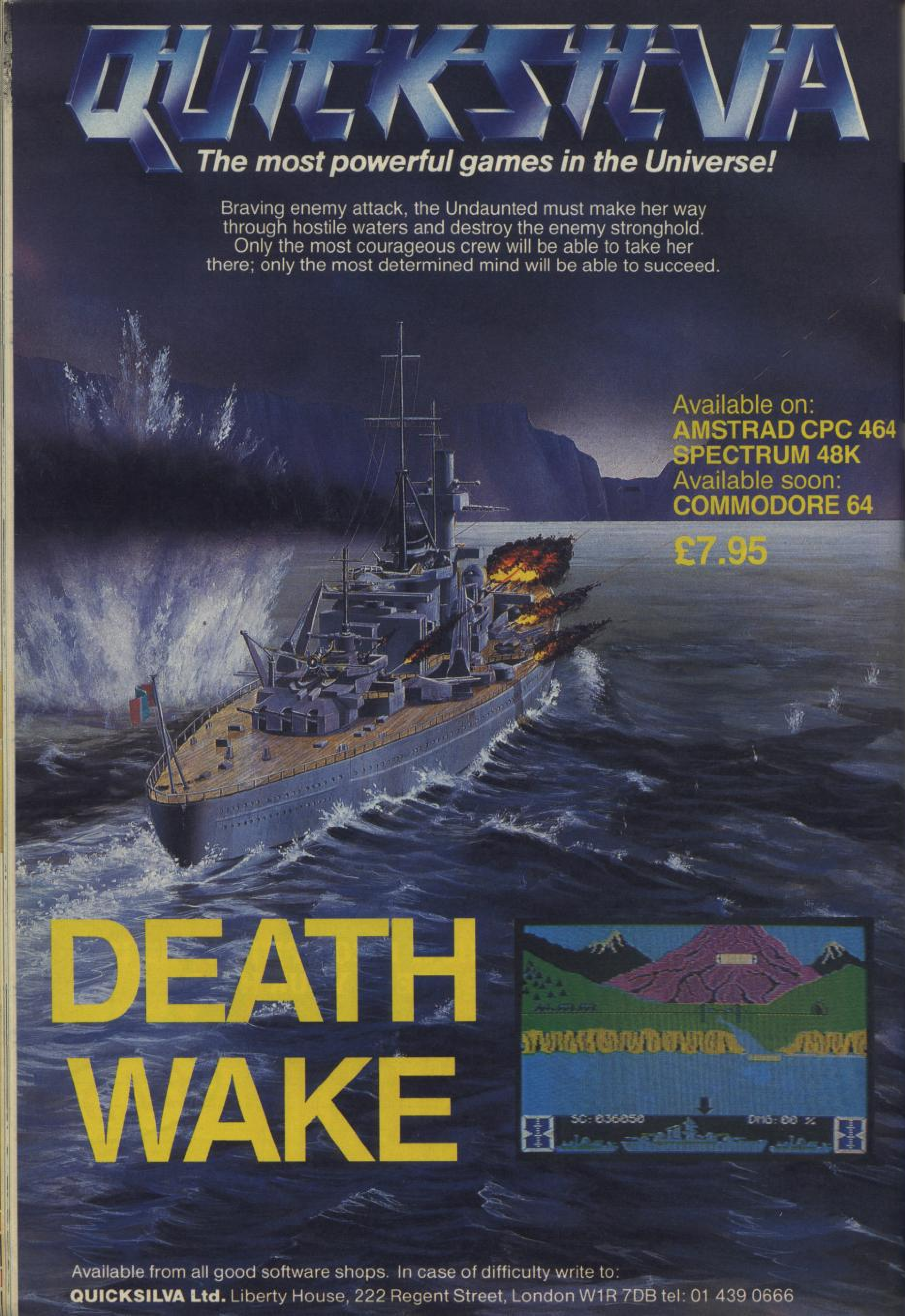
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Crash Competition

MAKE MIDI MUSIC WITH MICRO MUSICAL



Win a Casio CZ101 Synthesiser and MIDI interface

Nearly £500 worth of musical goodies as top prize

The nice fellows at **Micro Musical** in Coventry, who make a MIDI interface for the Spectrum, have decided to enter into the festive spirit and offer CRASH readers the chance to win some musical prizes.

Micro Musical's MIDI interface takes advantage of **Romantic Robot**'s music composing software, *Music Typewriter*, and allows you to control MIDI instruments with your Spectrum, composing and editing tunes off-line with the *Music Typewriter*. The interface package, (reviewed in the November issue) includes a cassette copy of *Music Typewriter*, software to drive the interface and a microdrive conversion program as well as the hardware itself, and normally sell for around the £100 mark.

And the Casio CZ101 — a synth with a five octave range and eight pre-set voices — can be found in the shops for around £350. Not surprisingly, it is MIDI compatible. Micro Musical are offering a complete package, containing everything you need to start making some very respectable music with your Spectrum, as the top prize in this Christmas Comp. A Casio CZ101 and a Micro Musical MIDI interface will soon be in the hands of a lucky CRASH reader.

Being generous to a fault, Micro Musical are also going to give away a couple of their MIDI interface packs as consolation prizes to runners up.

Our In-House Musical Maestro, Jon Bates, has been telling you about MIDI in TECH NICHE for a few months now. He's come up with a bijou quizette to test your attention — and knowledge of MIDI and things musical. Jon's set seven questions for you to ponder, and once you've come up with the answers, jot them down on the entry form and whizz it off to MIDI COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January 1986. Who knows, you could be up there on stage with some of the rich and famous synthesiser players after a little practice. Remember your 'umble Competition Minion if you do, won't you?

THE MICRO MUSICAL MIDI QUIZ

1) MIDI is an acronym for:

A Musical Instrument Digital Interface
B Manhattan Island Digital Instruments
C Musical Input Default Interface

2) Real-time sequencing is:

A Joining songs together to run one after another
B The micro memorising the tune as you play it
C Several tunes played at the same time by the micro

3) Which of these synthesisers will not plug in to a MIDI system:

A Yamaha DX7
B Korg Poly 800
C Mini Moog

4) How many synthesisers can a MIDI system control:

A Eight
B Sixty-four
C Sixteen

5) What is a MIDI "System Exclusive":

A Something you have designed yourself
B Something used between synthesisers made by the same manufacturer
C MIDI transmission on only one channel

6) The idea of MIDI was conceived and formulated in:

A 1969
B 1981
C 1984

7) Micro Musical's system is monophonic. What does Monophonic mean:

A Only one sound can be used
B Only one note can be sounded at any one time
C Only one synthesiser can be used at a time

LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOK BACK AT 1985

In the last Christmas Special 'Look Back', I said 84 was probably the year of CRASH, but as during 85 our sales per month rose from 49,000 to over 100,000 copies, it seems I was happily pessimistic about the year to come. Now it is passed — and what a year it has been!

Last year I was able to spot some trends — the death of the arcade shoot em up, the software slump, the dramatic improvement in software programming and the rise of the TV/Film/Game link up.

During 85 I think it would be fair to say that the arcade shoot em up made a significant come back, the software slump continued with many big and small companies vanishing, software programming techniques continued to improve and the TV/Film/Game tie-ins added books and commercial enterprise endorsements to become the most important aspect in games marketing. I'll be looking at all these trends as they appear month by month, starting with the 84/85 Christmas issue, which was really our January 85 edition.

JANUARY

It's becoming a tradition that the year should begin with the end, ie **Ultimate**ly. Play The Game dashed out with the dual release of *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore*. It was a bit 'controversial' in the sense that the high price tag remained and there were those who said *Underwurlde* was too similar to *Sabrewulf* despite the former being turned upright. *Knight Lore* was a different matter with its spanking new 3D interactive graphics ('filmation') which got around the fact that the game itself wasn't so big.

Fantasy had good pre-sales of their trilogy first part, *Backpackers Guide to the Universe*, partly thanks to early publicity in CRASH, but the review wasn't that hot because, despite very pretty graphics by **Stewart Ruecroft** and some amusing ideas from **Bob Hamilton**, the action content seemed to be lacking and the zoo-strategical element wasn't sufficient. However, it looked like a promising start to what would eventually build into a gigantic three-part game — but it was never realised. In the February issue we coolly reviewed *Drive In* and shortly afterwards Fantasy ceased to exist.

Software Projects had been a bit quiet, but in January had two games on the go, *Astronut* and *Lode Runner*, both reasonably well received critically but under-advertised and neither seemed to seriously grab the public's attention. Instead, the Soft Proj ad budget went on their **Software Super Savers**, latest in the growing line of low-cost games. Despite good sales, budget games were still a bit of a joke (apart from one or two of **Firebird**'s), and with games like *Fred's Fan Factory* and *Moon Lighter* among the six released, Software Super Savers didn't seem to be breaking the tradition very much, but at least some of them were quite difficult to play.

Wanted: Monty Mole (CRASH readers' Best Platform Game from 84) had put **Gremlin Graphics** right on top, but their Spectrum *Potty Pigeon* was a bit of a disappointment in the New Year, although it was an original re-working of Crowther's already weak CBM64 version. Throughout the year, Gremlin would try to recapture the fresh spirit of Monty without complete success until Peter Harrap's true follow up *Monty on the Run*.

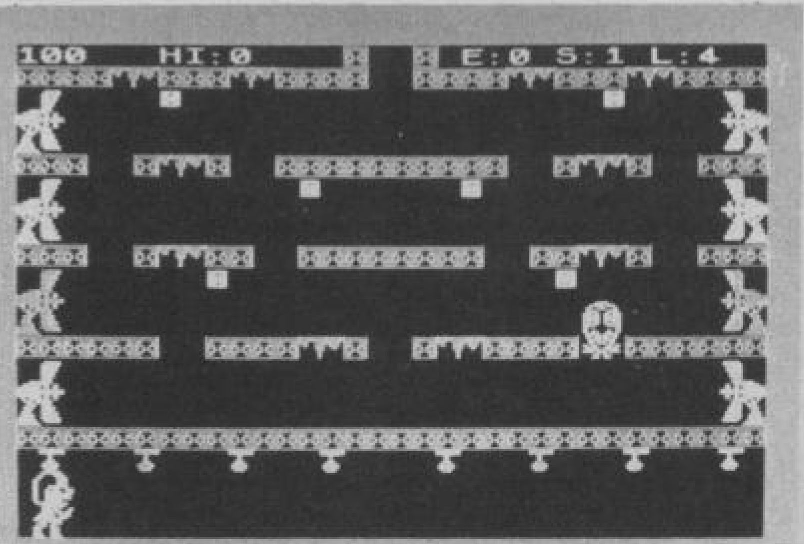
Not unlike Ultimate, **Vortex** is another software company whose reputation rests on few and usually good games written by **Costa Panayi**. Their follow-up to *TLL* was *Cyclone*. It employed very similar 3D graphics to the former game with the addition of a slight strategical element, but generally we felt there was no significant advance made and it seemed to lack the lustre of excitement needed to make it a big game.

ZZAP! 64's hero Rockford made his first appearance on the Spectrum in *Boulder Dash*, a game I thought absolutely marvellous despite its initially primitive-looking graphics. To play it was to become instantly addicted. It came from State Soft but was marketed by **Front Runner**, K-Tel's re-named and somewhat short-lived software company.

Two big releases this month were (finally) **Atarisoft**'s *Pole Position* and **Domark**'s *Eureka!*. Atari had a difficult task to beat the many previous releases all based on their road-racing arcade hit, and in fact they didn't really manage — the game was reasonable but too late. They did try an abortive earlier release at the 84 PCW Show, but criticism was so heavy it was withdrawn for improvements to be made. *Eureka!*, the multi-part adventure with a £25,000 prize for the first to complete it, was described as a real game despite the hype, but Derek Brewster didn't agree. However he did like the second ever release from **Dorcas** (formerly Doric), *Runes of Zendos*, but sadly the Distribution network failed to see eye to eye with CRASH and the adventure never received the exposure and sales it deserved — very like **Mizar**'s *Out of the Shadows*.

Two other games are worth a mention — *Steve Davis Snooker* from **CDS** and *The Prince* from **CCS**. The snooker game was a typical example of endorsement games, using a well known personality to help sell a product, in this case one of the best ever snooker/pool simulations. *The Prince* went some way to prove that sponsorship (The Cambridge Awards) can result in good programs.

The only other item of note, is that this issue saw the first column from Robin Candy, an enlarged edition of Pokes. Robin was to become a fixture if not exactly a fitting from this point on, and the bane of my life (but that's another story).



FEBRUARY

February saw a few major releases, four from **Ocean**, still chasing that seemingly elusive CRASH Smash. The worthiest was probably *Gift From the Gods*, the first game from a new team called **Denton Designs**, who were all ex-Imagine programmers, partly financed by Ocean and soon to delight with several more games. The best was *Match Day*, the football simulation to beat them all, and a game many readers felt we dismissed unfairly without it being a Smash. The third was *Hunchback II*, not perhaps as delightful graphically as *Hunchback*, but a better game to play and at least it didn't earn the nickname Hunchbug like the first one did. The fourth was another comeback in the form of *Kong Strikes Back*, an interesting but slightly indifferent game that lacked content but proved fairly tough.

Hewson Consultants came out with *Technician Ted* and proved that platform games could be tougher and better than *Jet Set Willy*. The public seemed to like it as well and it made the charts in a big way, upsetting those software houses who had turned the programmers down on the grounds that the game

was merely a Willy clone. **Firebird** proved they could release non-budget games in *Buggy Blast* and made a move towards reinstating the shoot em up with knobs on. **Elite** did the same with their next TV tie-in *Airwolf* and sparked some controversy — CRASH liked the game because it was tough (though not very big), whereas some other mags slated it as absolute rubbish. It did pretty well in the charts though.

But the two biggest releases in the sense of expectancy were **Legend**'s *The Great Space Race* and **Beyond**'s *Doomdark's Revenge. Alas, the former turned out to be the grandest flop in games software history — for once every magazine critic and virtually every reader was in agreement, the box was fine, the contents amazingly poor. Beyond, of course, fared much better and* **Mike Singleton**'s follow up to state-of-the-art *Lords of Midnight* was an even better program (though some readers disagreed). The other big hype release was the Spectrum version of *Ghostbusters*. This **Activision** 'mega tie-in' has been claimed as the biggest seller of all time — perhaps, however we felt that the great CBM64 sound track covered a lack of real game, and this was more strongly highlighted on the Spectrum with a flat and inadequate rendering of the disco hit song.

On the budget front, **Mastertronic** came of age with an excellent platform/maze/adventure game called *Finders Keepers*, upsetting some cherished beliefs (including some of ours) that budget software couldn't crack it, while a relatively new house, **Dynavision** chased the definitely elusive 'Zaxxon' game with a similar rendition called *Havoc* — we felt it was pretty poor.

A quiet behind-the-scenes battle for the TV quiz series 'Blockbusters' came into the open when **Macsen** released a game of the same name, properly licenced, and forced **Compusound** to change their earlier version to something else. This turned out to be *Wender Bender*, marketed by **Ranks High**. They bullied us for some time to re-review *Wender Bender* on the grounds that they had had a raw deal, having received permission to do 'Blockbusters' in the first place. Eventually we did re-review it, only to find that Ranks High suddenly weren't answering the phone.

Another battle loomed within the pages of CRASH as a result of Derek's dismissive review of **Interceptor**'s adventure *Jewels of Babylon*. One of the directors of the company rang and became quite insulting on the phone about both the review, CRASH and Derek Brewster. Roger Kean, as is his wont, replied stingingly in the following issue.

MARCH

March saw six major games with widely differing appeal. **Firebird** kicked off with another large game in their 'Gold' range. After some frenzied last minute name changing, it emerged as *Gyron*, a mega-maze game with a Porsche as a prize to the first completion. Although reviewed in March, readers had to wait some time for its actual release. Shoot em ups hit the vogue in a big way with *Moon Cresta* from **Incentive**, the first time this venerable and difficult arcade original had turned up on a home computer.

Micromania hit gold with their maze shoot em up *Project Future*, but sadly it was to be Micromania's last appearance and within another two months they were gone, owed a fortune by the collapsing distributor, Tiger. **Mikro-Gen**'s fortunes, however, never looked better with the release of another Wally Week program, the multi-character graphic adventure *Everyone's a Wally*. The game was reckoned to be good enough not to need the song of the same name by Mike Berry, and if Mikro-Gen had hoped it might make the pop charts they were to be disappointed — however it did for a while become a regular musical catch-phrase on the Steve Wright Show on Radio 1.

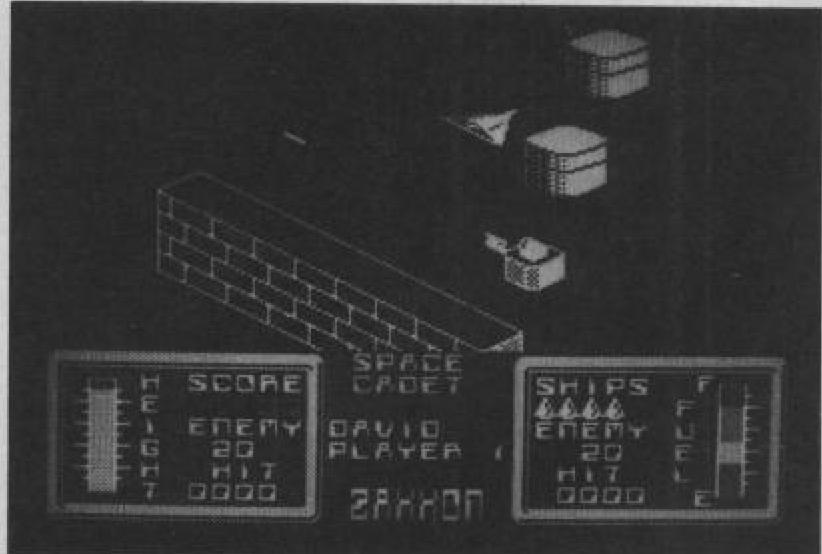
A company better known for their CBM64 games was **Bubble Bus** who, with their second ever Spectrum release *Wizard's Lair*, made a Smash. Despite the game's visual similarity to *Atic Atac* and *Sabrewulf*, in play it was sufficiently exciting and difficult to earn its own spurs.

For adventurers, Derek thought *Spiderman* from **Adventure International** was a worthy hit from the Scott Adams stable. Sadly, the Steve Jackson games promised from Ad Int and reported in the previous issue, have never materialised (although they are still being worked on). Another adventure (one from a time previous) well regarded was *castle Blackstar*, slightly rewritten from its original marketing, and put out by **CDS**.

US Gold, riding high with their rash of American Commodore games, were not doing quite so well with the Spectrum conversions. This month saw the release of *Blue Max* and (finally) the real *Zaxxon*. Both were disappointing, the latter proving that 'Zaxxon' was still to be done properly on the Spectrum.

Melbourne House offered us an oddity in *Hellfire*, a three-part game with good graphics but some strange gameplay — it didn't really hit home. Another game that didn't hit (probably because it simply wasn't different enough) was **Artic**'s *Mutant Monty*, and the lack of advertising to back it up seemed to point up Artic's continuing decline as a software house. **Virgin Games** was another house in some decline (at least on the Spectrum although *Strangeloop* for the CBM64 and *Sorcery* for the Amstrad did very well), but their strategy/simulation based on the evil doings of the pop business and called *The Biz* was well received. Evil doings were responsible for getting Monty Mole into prison, but **Gremlin Graphics** still hadn't recaptured the right form for their hero in **Chris Kerry**'s *Monty is Innocent* — it looked as though it required an escape to get things moving again.

Ski Star 2000 was one interesting program we reviewed, one of the first to start using icons to help the player, in this case to redesign the ski slopes. It was from **Richard Shepherd** — an unusual departure for them. But the news everyone wanted was the password to access the very carefully protected second program on **Design Design**'s 84 hit *Dark Star*. I was able to 'exclusively' reveal that to see *Spectacle* you had to type in 'Everyone's a nervous wreck'. I was thrilled — my first ever scoop.



APRIL

April was an interesting month not so much for the volume of software produced, which was actually quite low, but because **Ultimate** released the well advertised and eagerly awaited *Alien 8* — and within days, the letters began to flow. 'It's a rip off', '*Knight Lore* in space with no improvements' were typical of some of the comments. But many thought otherwise, the CRASH team included, and decided that *Alien 8* was an improvement. Besides which, a fair person might have realised that after spending so long developing the 3D graphics used in *Knight Lore*, Ultimate was bound to employ them again. In fact within a few months many other software houses were to have a go at similar interactive 3D graphics, proving, if nothing else, that the industry believed Ultimate were right.

Gremlin Graphics gave us a new hero in *Sam Stoat (Safebreaker)*, related in theory to Monty Mole, but again it didn't quite hit the spot. **Mastertronic** also dipped a bit with *Chiller*, a game that had done reasonably well on the 64 but translated poorly to the Spectrum. **Ocean**'s offering was the intriguing *Pud Pud*, a game that was definitely odd odd.

TV tie-ins continued unabated with the masters **Elite** and their *Dukes of Hazzard* and the less often heard of **Red Shift** and a strategical adventure based on the BBC's *Tripods. Dukes of Hazzard* seemed typical of Elite's

recent games, pretty good graphically but lacking in content. Both Derek Brewster and Angus Ryall slammed *Tripods* into the ground. Strategy and tie-ins turned out to be a winner, however, for **Argus Press Software** with the release of their tense adventure based on the movie *Alien* — the first CRASH Smash from Angus.

US Gold finally struck pay dirt and a Smash with *Raid Over Moscow*, a game that finally presented a reasonable 'Zaxxon' style screen among others, and was successfully hyped by the press as 'controversial' because of its Kremlin-attacking scenario. The 'new look' shoot em up was given a boost by **System 3**'s *Death Star Interceptor*, which we thought was pretty good, especially the space sequence, but which some other mags regarded as utter rubbish. **Romantic Robot**, better known for utilities, surprised everyone by releasing *Wriggler* and getting a CRASH Smash, while **Micromega** surprised us by releasing *A Day in the Life* (of Sir Clive) and



disappointing us for the first time. **Addictive Games** had lived successfully off *Football Manager* for an eternity, so the release of a similar game based on the software business and called *Software Star* was greeted with some interest, but it failed to live up to the more exciting world of soccer.

One of the other 'majors', **Bug-Byte** gave us a comho had been quiet for some time, came out with two very different games, *Fantastic Voyage* and *Mighty Magus*, but although they were both quite good in their own ways, neither really made much impact and it looked as though another established and major house was in search of the right product. Unlike **Melbourne House** who released *Starion* and for a while looked as though they might have beaten Firebird onto the market with an *Elite* like game. The 3D vector graphics were just about the fastest and smoothest yet seen on the Spectrum, and the addition of historical puzzle games made it quite unique.

MAY

In fact May was a pretty good month. **Hewson Consultants** came out with Steve Turner's follow up game *Dragontorc of Avalon* and it was even better than its forerunner, *Avalon*. **US Gold** had two smashes in the arcade conversions of *Spy Hunter* and the pre-karate rage *Bruce Lee*. A software house that had been a bit quiet since its Ket Trilogy adventures, was **Incentive**, but they put that right with the furious puzzle game *Confuzion*, and at long last **Ocean** made its second CRASH Smash with *World Baseball Series* although that was under the newly acquired name of **Imagine**. Even **Elite**, about whom we had been despairing of a game to match the graphics, came up with a strong product in the endorsed *Grand National* — the best yet horse racing game and one which boasted excellent equestrian animation. On the adventure front, Derek was pretty thrilled with **Level 9**'s latest graphic and text *Emerald Isle*. By and large, everyone was so pleased that even Robin Candy went psychedelic in the Playing Tips.

JUNE

A mixed bag this month with some disappointments and one or two pleasant surprises. The one 'dead cert' was **Beyond**'s *Shadowfire*, the first fully icon-driven graphics adventure. There was a danger that the novelty of the icons might disguise the lack of a game, but **Denton Designs** did a good job



and the game matched its tremendous look, although Dentons themselves admitted to wanting more game elements in the follow up when they got going on it. The other Smashes for the month fell to adventure and strategy with *Gremlins* from **Adventure International**, **Games Workshop**'s *Runestone*, a 'landscaping' adventure to rival *Lords of Midnight* and *Witches Cauldron*, an adventure based on **Mikro-Gen**'s famous Wally graphics and reviewed a bit later than it should have been as it proved too difficult for Derek to get through without help! And on the strategy frontline, Angus was pleased with *Arnhem* from **CCS**, a company he had always regarded with mixed admiration and amusement for their dogged struggle to convince an uncaring world that war games could be fun. He was also surprised that **Lothlorien** turned in another worthy strategy game called *Overlords*. Lothlorien was about to be taken under the expanding wings of Argus Press Software — would it make any difference to their performance?

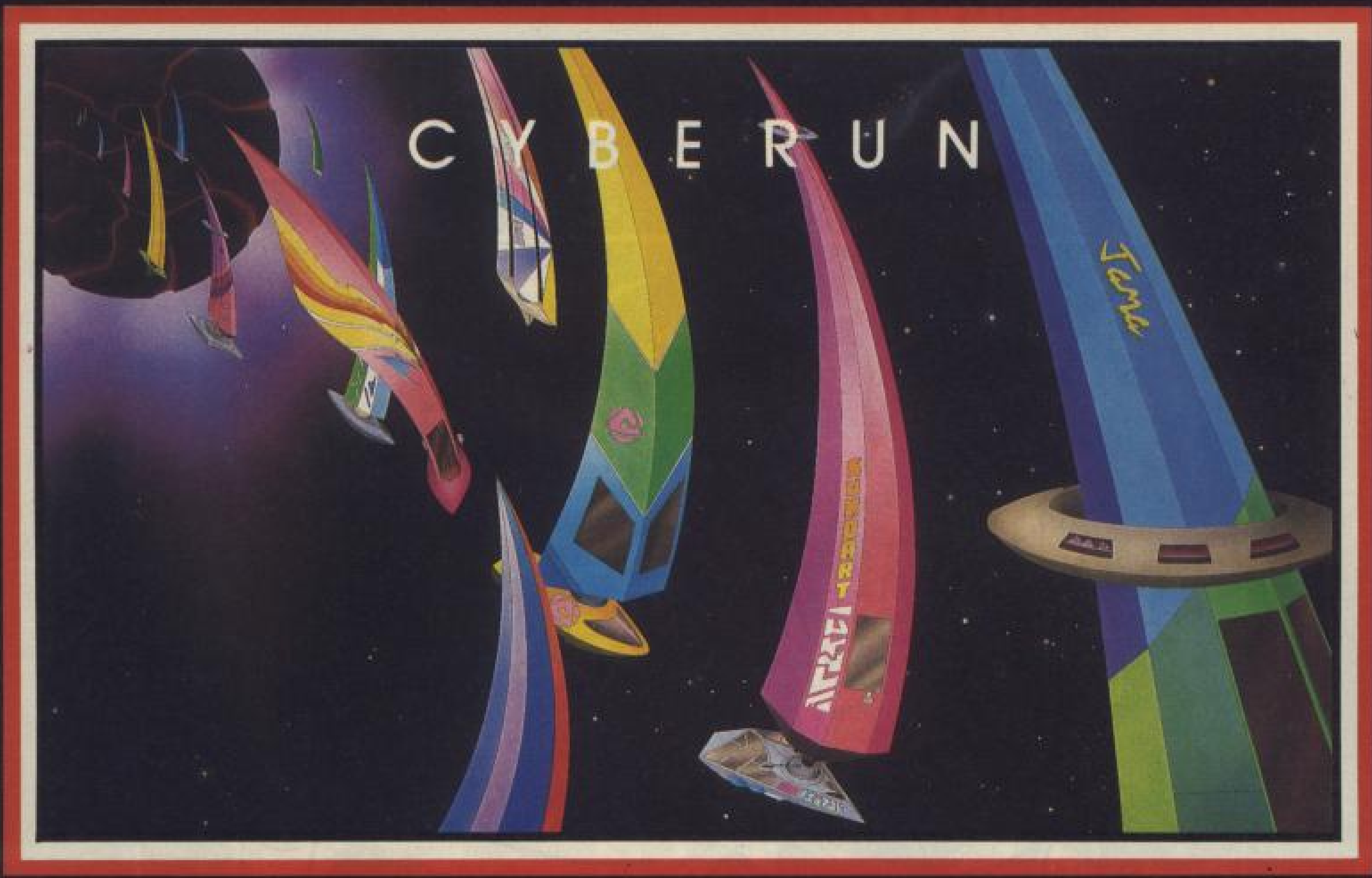
Legend fought back against the poor publicity generated by the flop of *The Great Space Race* by providing us with the graphically interesting 3D game *Komplex*, but despite its programming worthiness and its immense size, it still seemed to lack something in play. **A & F** were also back with a follow up, trying to recapture the enigmatic success of *Chuckie Egg* with the appropriately named *Chuckie Egg 2*. In addictive terms it wasn't a patch on the first game, but it did offer numerous platform leaping locations and plenty of adventure elements to keep fans happy for some hours. Another follow up was *Falcon Patrol 2* from **Virgin Games** (although the original had only been on the 64). This was a disappointment, a rather thin game and graphics that didn't look as though they had progressed beyond Durell's much earlier *Harrier Attack*, which the game strongly resembled.

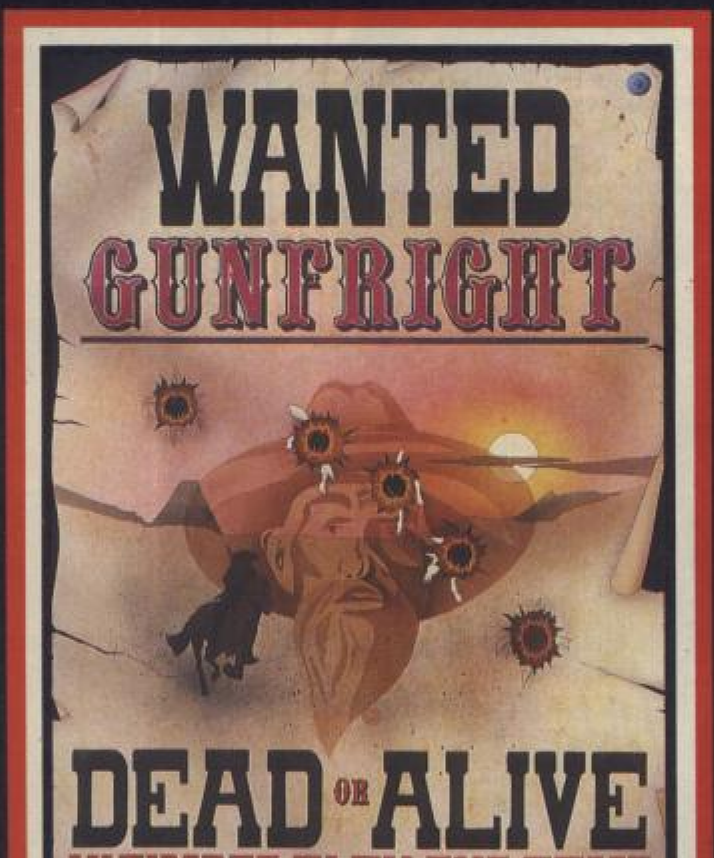
One surprise hit was *Tapper* from **US Gold**. The game appeared a month before on the 64 and looked like a difficult one to translate well, but the Spectrum version from **Platinum productions** was well up to scratch despite the inevitable animation clashes, and proved to be one of those hugely and enjoyably frustrating no-win games and one of my personal favourites.

Tie-ins and endorsements were on the increase this month; after much pre-publicity, **DK'tronics** released *Minder*, their tie-in game, based on the Thames TV series of the same name. CRASH had seen one or two very early versions, and wasn't particularly impressed. A number of points made by Derek Brewster were passed back to the programmer, but in the event the finished game failed to excite us over much. Another


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Access

tie-in was *Give my Regards to Broad Street*, a novel travel and search adventure with arcade overtones based on Paul McCartney's musical film, which **Argus Press Software** brought out under their 'Mind Games' series. As mentioned previously, there was *Gremlins*, our preview of *Frankie Goes to Hollywood*, *Jonah Barrington's Squash* and *911TS*. The latter, from **Elite** seemed to play too heavily on the graphics used in *Grand National* to be very different and the tie-in with Dunlop Tyres turned out to be more of a marketing element than it first seemed, in as much as the game had originally been developed purely for Dunlop. Dunlop also make sports equipment, possibly even Jonah Barrington's squash balls (I'm no expert!), which featured in the tough simulation by **Malcolm Evans** of **New Generation**.

On the budget front **Mastertronic** released the unpronounceable *Nonterraqueous*, not a bad big-maze semi-shoot em up, and to underline, as it were, the joke about budget software, **Firebird** came out with *Don't Buy This*, a compilation of the worst ever programs that had been sent in over the past few months. Naturally enough, it sold rather well.

JULY

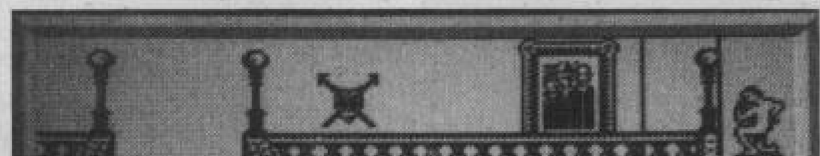
Into the second half of the year; traditionally the first of the slump summer months. Yet Spectrum software was holding up very well and many more good quality games were being released than during the same months of last year. One which arrived too late to do it justice in a full review was **Odin**'s *Nodes of Yesod*, so it merely got a Mangram and more of that later ...

Tie-ins had a veritable field day with the big guns — *Rocky Horror Show* from **CRL** and *A View To A Kill* from **Domark**. The former, based on the decadent seventies stage show and film, did rather well to capture some of the film's feeling, and the graphics were pretty good too, sadly the game just lacked enough content to make it great. Domark's effort (programmed by Softstone, who took over Perfection Software, who produced the early CRASH success *Odyssey 1*) was far weaker. The three-part game followed some of Bond's exploits from the movie, but the game ideas were thin, Bond looked like a stick insect and all the publicity over how much money Tony Crowther was paid to write the music was wasted on Spectrum owners anyway. Nevertheless, the CRASH review was pretty kind and the game was better on the Spectrum than on the 64.

A third tie-in, however, managed to be even more awful — *Super Gran* from **Tynesoft** sent the ageing maternal heroine of Tyne & Tees TV fame hurtling through landscapes of appalling graphics with a control over her actions that only a World War I flying ace would remember. Looking at *Super Gran* was like looking through a time tunnel and seeing the past — at least graphically it was. **Quicksilva** also held a mirror up to us in the beautiful looking *Glass*. It had some fine points but missed one or two in the shoot em up stakes and ended up giving a slight feeling of dissatisfaction on completing it. Mirrors seemed to be in the news when we Smashed *Dynamite Dan* from **Mirrorsoft**, one of my favourites (though Robin Candy has never agreed — his tough luck). The graphics lifted this platform game above most others, but some clever innovations, incredibly tough gameplay and jolly music added the spice.

Endorsement of the month award went to **Alligata** for their *Jack Charlton's Match Fishing*. Some people reckon fishing is as interesting as watching a river cutting a valley, but the valleys are busy enough with weekend anglers and the sport is among the most popular. *Match Fishing* boasted an absolutely excellent lakeside scene by David Thorpe and, although the rest of the graphics weren't up to much, the atmosphere it lent carried the rest of this enjoyable simulation along quite happily.

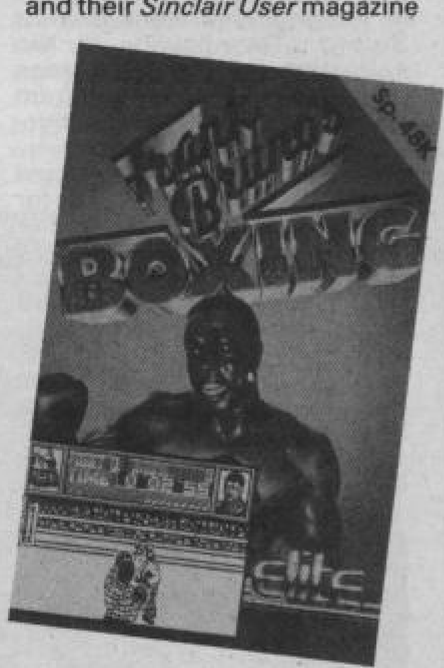
On the Smash side of things apart from *Dynamite Dan*, there was *Herbert's Dummy Run*, the enjoyable romp of Master Week through a department store full of **Mikro-Gen** arcade games, but with a tinge of warning that perhaps the Wally Weekers were getting a touch too similar in style and content; there was *Cauldron* from **Palace**, a hit on the 64 that had been really well translated to provide a broomstick 'Defender' and a very hard series of platform games; and surprise of the month was **Lothlorien**'s *Battle of the Bulge*, their first under the Argus banner, which left Angus Ryall nonplussed with admiration for both Lothlorien **and** Argus, two companies for whom previously he had had few good things to say. But for many, the big thrill was **Gargoyle Games**'s *Dun Darach*, starring Grego-celtic hero Cuchulainn in his second graphics adventure. It was a big thrill for then CRASH editor Roger Kean, who got credited on the inlay for inventing the idea of door numbers used in the game. This was one of Robin Candy's personal favourites, and I don't know whether that says more for him or less for the game (but at least he can spell Kookulainn, when I can't).



Two other games in July worthy of note were *Archon*, a weird mix of chess-like board game and arcade action from **Ariolasoft**, and *Super Pipeline II* by **Taskset**, a company venturing off the 64 onto the Spectrum for the first time. The game suffered in translation with colour clashing characters, but still managed to be addictive and difficult.

AUGUST

The August issue of CRASH suffered a bit of a setback when it ran into trouble with EMAP and their *Sinclair User* magazine



— but enough of that ...

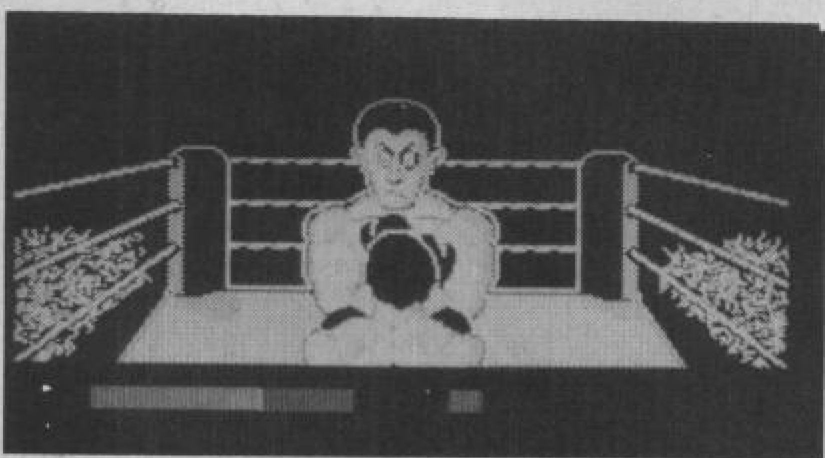
Somewhat belatedly, *Nodes of Yesod* got its airing and a CRASH Smash. The graphics, action and ideas all contributed to making a great game from **Odin** (who had previously been Thor). In fact there were some great Smashes in August. *Frankie Goes To Hollywood* arrived and proved again that **Denton Designs** could come up not only with an extraordinary mixture of fluent graphics but also with some extraordinary game ideas. They also gave **Ocean** (proper) a real CRASH Smash. Ocean got yet another through the **Imagine** label with *Hypersports*. Not to be outdone **Beyond** released the two totally hateable Mad Magazine espionage experts, the Black and White spies in *Spy vs Spy*. Once again, the graphics were excellent, using split screen simultaneous displays for the two players, but it was the humour (taken straight from Mad) that made the game a great one.

Clever graphics were also responsible for the slick presentation of the adventure Smash *The Fourth Protocol* released by **Hutchinsons** and programmed by **The Electronic pencil Company** — a name to be reckoned

with in the future. here, for the first time, Macintosh-like business icons were used to drive the adventure along, and it worked a treat — so did the adventure.

The tendency to 'self copy' was once again rearing its head with all sorts of people about to release karate games, but first came the boxers. **Elite** produced just about their best ever game in the endorsed *Frank Bruno's Boxing*. The fluidity of the animation just had the edge over *Rocco*, a game from Spanish software house **Dinamic** and marketed here by **Gremlin Graphics**. Gremlin had won a battle with **Silversoft** for the rights to this and another game called *Profanation*, a very tough jump and seek game that was, in theory at least, the third part of a trilogy of which Silversoft ended up with only the first two parts, *Saimazoom* and *Baba Liba*. Gremlin Graphics got the best of the bargain.

We finally reviewed **Artic**'s latest release *Paws*, having deemed it sensible to leave it until Artic had made up their minds what to call it. Originally named *Cats*, after the famous musical, Artic had trouble in obtaining copyright clearance so the name changed but the game didn't, and it was cute but hardly mega-stuff. *The Covenant* from **PSS** was much better as was **CRL**'s unusual *Juggernaut* — the sort of vehicle that gets hung up under the low half-timbered frames of quaint Ludlow town. Biggest disappointment of the month, perhaps even the quarter, was *Jet Set Willy II*. **Software Projects** had, of course, scored an enormous hit with *Jet Set Willy*, and there was always rumoured to be a sequel on its way (Jet Set Willy and the Taxman — or something). So news of a second game was good news indeed, except that it turned out to be 40 more rooms added onto the existing game and that was pretty disappointing, especially as programmer **Matthew Smith** had nothing much to do with it.



SEPTEMBER

The last month of this unusually busy summer turned out a handful of goodies. Everyone had been awaiting **Costa Panayi**'s latest 3D developments, and expectations were well rewarded with *Highway Encounter* from **Vortex** — a very linear game with extraordinarily attractive graphics and a hero-bot looking not unlike a Dalek. It was voted a CRASH Smash within minutes, and protracted play didn't diminish the delight. **Gremlin Graphics**, after much pre-warning, launched the proper follow-up to their huge molar hit of last year by **Peter Harrap** — *Monty on the Run* followed a similar pattern to its predecessor, but there were more rooms and some of the nastiest little traps yet devised for the unwary platform gamer. It tended to rather over-shadow the other Gremlin release, written by **Chris Kerry**, *Metabolis*. I thought this attractive and unusual maze/search game deserved better than it got, and its sense of humour was refreshing.

One game based more on a humourous character than on incipient humour that just arrived in time to be reviewed and Smashed, was *Popeye* from **Dk'Tronics** by the venerable author **Don Priestly**. Not only did the game boast super large graphics, but ones that suffered no attribute problems.

Attractive graphics have characterised 1985, often giving new life to well tried ideas. The usually novel and innovative **Design Design** turned their hands (or **Graham Stafford**'s hands) to a collect em up maze game with great graphics by **Stuart Ruecroft** (who had been responsible for the graphics in *Backpacker's*). Despite the obvious format, *On the Run* turned out to be likeable, fast and difficult and a Smash.

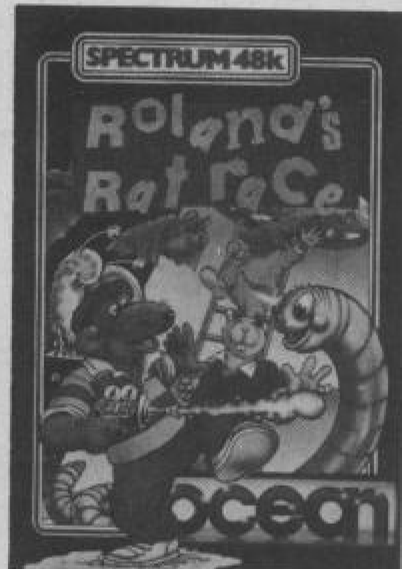
There were two 'red' releases in September, one an adventure and a Smash from ace writer-explorers **Level 9**, and one a flight simulator from **Database**. *Red Moon* impressed Derek as much for its indication of Level 9's durability as for the game's undoubted qualities of excitement, atmosphere and entertainment value. *Red Arrows* was another matter however, a disappointment after the drawn out wait for the program's release. It put you in the cockpit of a Red Arrow team jet, flying exhibition formation aerobatics. Unfortunately the simulation turned out slow and somewhat unrealistic.

Probably biggest disappointment of the month, though, was **Ocean**'s *Roland's Rat Race*, a TV tie-in with really very little tied into it. Thinly disguised as a platform/maze game, you had to untangle the knot of passages in search of Roland's kidnapped friends and get to TVAM on time. **US Gold** also turned out a disappointment in *Buck Rogers*, although a very good conversion from the 64, it lacked any real spark, not perhaps surprising in such an old arcade game.

However, another, even older game made its appearance on the computer in the form of *Cluedo* from **Leisure Genius** — the official version of this ever popular board game. The Spectrum version was rated pretty well, with everyone looking forward to the following release of *Monopoly*.

If the *Red Arrows* simulation was a let down, two others this month were not, **ASP**'s *Nick Faldo Plays the Open* turned out to be the best golf game yet, using fashionable icons to make setting up shots as easy as pie and comfortably realisistic; while for choo choo fans, **Hewson Consultants**' *Southern Belle* gave us the freedom of the engine driver's footplate on an old steam locomotive doing the Brighton run. An unusual area for simulations, and one which led one reviewer to think it easier to control an aeroplane than a train! *Southern Belle*, however, captivated all those who had ever wanted to grow up and be an engine driver.

That more or less rounded up September except for **Domark**'s release of our very own **Derek Brewster**'s *Code Name Mat II*, the follow up, not surprisingly, to *Code Name Mat*. We had loved the latter game, with its complex 3D graphics, but the sequel seemed too similar to score heavily, and got hit hard by reviewers for not having 'advanced' with time. The resulting review upset Derek, a man who hardly ever complains unless it's about me, but at least it shut up critics who had made great capital of the fact that all his other games had been CRASH Smashes, and was something funny going on?



OCTOBER

As if to calm everyone down before Christmas, October turned out to be a bit arid with only the Spectrum version of *Way of the Exploding Fist* from **Melbourne House** really standing out. Of the long promised spate of self-copy karate games, this was the first to arrive. It converted from the 64 quite successfully, and playing it well meant combining hand and eye co-ordination skills with action in such a way as to offer plenty of enjoyment and mirror the real martial art in as realistic manner as possible on a computer.

It's true that **Ultimate** scored with *Nightshade*, but nevertheless, there was an undertone in the reviewers' comments that suggested they were taking *Knight Lore/Alien 8* a bit too far, and that something original was required to revitalise the classic software house image. It also wasn't missed that a company other than Ultimate was credited with the programming . . .

The only other Smash was *Touchstones of Rhiannon*, an

adapation of the Robin Hood story from **Adventure International** and based heavily on the recent TV series.

There was a handful of 'solid' games, two from **US Gold** having been heralded for some time — *Dambusters* and *Bounty Bob*, both big hits on the 64, both slightly flawed on the Spectrum. *Bounty Bob* especially seemed unable to carry its cult status across from machine to machine and resulted merely in a good platform game. Beyond's



second label **Monolith** offered us a rockin' good time with *Rockford's Riot*, the follow up to very successful *Boulder Dash* which, while still a fine game, mostly contained the same gameplay elements as its predeccessor.

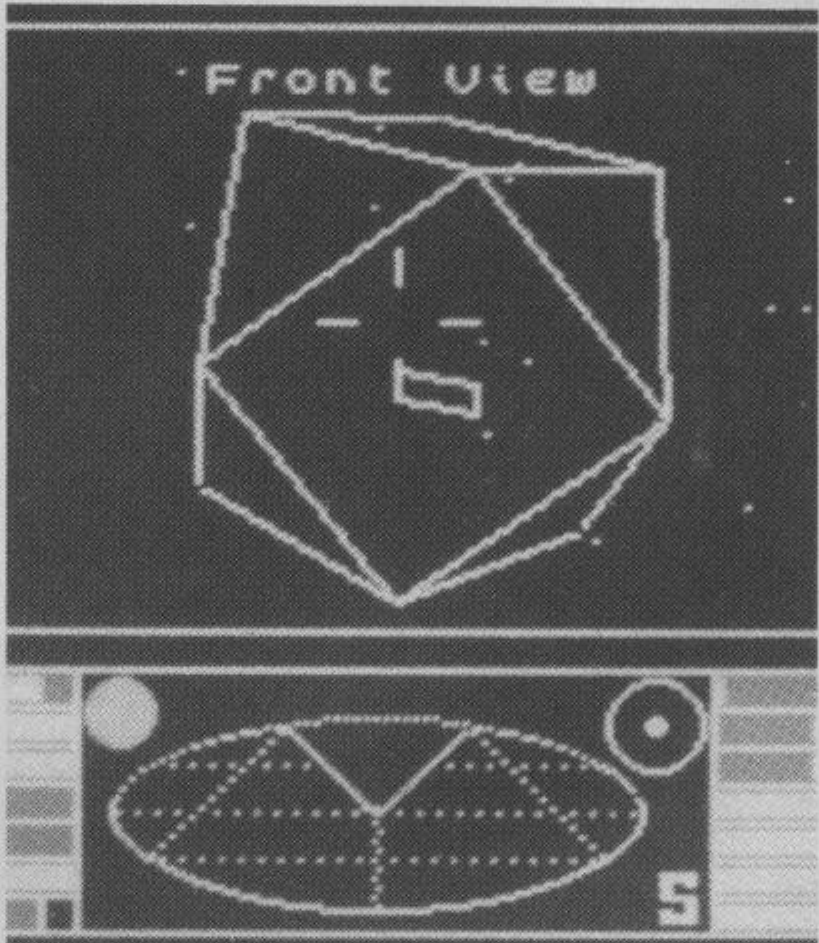
It was left to Derek to discover the two most unusual games of the month in the adventure section, *The Rats* from book publishers **Hodder & Stoughton** and *The Secret of St Brides* by a dubious organisation purporting to be St Brides School for Young Ladies, whose packaging came complete with supporting literature of a slightly off beat British 'gels' school type *a la* St Trinians (a feeling reinforced by your playing the heroine, Trixie Trinian). *The Rats*, based on the best seller Herbert book, made a strange combination between adventure of the 'select an option' type and strategy cov ered in a thick custard of gory horror as the player waded knee-deep through the bloodied remains of rat-gnawed London (reminding me yet again why I left the place)!

Another slightly unusual game turned up from **PSS**, marketing a French pinball table construction kit under the name of *Macadam Bumper* (it led to the review compiler being able to use the joke: Language: **French machine code** — yawn). With this you could play a preset table or redesign it. An excellent offering, but there's still room yet for a really flexible pinball designer program. We also reviewed a program from our old friends at **Eclipse** aimed at the then-about-to-be-current craze for comet spotting and aptly named *Halley's Comet*.

But if there were few heavenly bodies to be seen screaming across October's software sky, our forward-looking telescopes were trained on deep space at new games from **Gargoyle Games** and **Hewson Consultants**, an extraordinary looking one with the appropriately heavenly body name of *Tau Ceti* from **CRL** and one set on the Zoids planet from **Martech** . . .

Tau Ceti and *Zoids* got previewed, but **The Edge** got *Fairlight* out for us to rave over. Here was another 3D room exploring game with puzzles to be solved, using graphics that improved upon those employed by Ultimate and one in which objects behaved realistically in interaction with the playing character. *Fairlight* has been the outstanding achievement of The Edge to date. Turning the page of that issue, another Smash emerged — *Elite*. **Firebird** had purchased this cult BBC game for a fabulous sum from the programmers, converted it to the 64, where it was well received, and had spent considerable time making the Spectrum version even better (though alas, not the music)! It's the sort of game (space trader/shoot em up) you either love to death or hate. If the former, then you can't put it down for months.

Bubble Bus also flew us to the deepest regions of space and a black hole with **Stephen Crow**'s follow up to his excellent *Wizard's Lair* called *Starquake*. It had visual overtones of *Underwurlde* and the more recent *Nodes of Yesod* in its superb graphics and offered a high degree of playability with many neat touches and novel ideas.



NOVEMBER

Hewson's *Astroclone* saw veteran 3D progger **Steve Turner** back in space from his sojourn in the remote past of Maroc and pitted once again against those indefatigable foe the Seiddab in a complex combination of space shoot em up and 3D room exploration game. To some degree Steve and the men from **Gargoyle Games** seem to have been moving on parallel courses in recent months and *Astroclone* had uncanny similarities to Gargoyle's release *Marsport*. This introduced us to a new hero, John Kepler Marsh and the return of Gargoyle to space. *Marsport* was the first of a



planned trilogy of space games called *The Siege of Earth*, complete with an excellent background story from the pen of **Greg Follis** about man's meeting with aliens and its consequent results. The subtle additions to the previous *Dun Darach* together with Gargoyle's inimitable mix of puzzle, pun and action made *Marsport* a sure fire hit.



Back on Earth, **Melbourne House** disappointed us slightly with *Fighting Warrior*, a sort of ancient Egyptian martial arts program, where it was felt that there wasn't quite enough going on to overcome the fact that much of its content was actually the 'Exploding Fist' control mode.

Ocean, too, brought us and our joysticks back to earth with a thump and *Daley Thompson's Super Test*. Although undeniably fun, *Super Test* really offered nothing new over *Decathlon* and was over-shadowed by *Hypersports*.

US Gold's November game was another monster hit from the 64, *Impossible Mission*, but like its stable mate *Bounty Bob*, it somehow failed to carry the adulation with it over to the Spectrum, resulting in a respectable enough and tough platform/exploring game.

We also saw the first ever release of a new software name, **Electric Dreams**, backed by Activision and fronted by ex-Quicksilva boss, **Rod Cousens**. The game was called *Riddler's Den* and sparked a bit of a controversy with US Gold, who were also launching a budget label under the same name. *Riddler's Den* was a good start, priming the market for their December release . . .

convinced everyone of its Smash merits. Derek enjoyed (and Smashed) the **Melbourne House** spoof 'adventure' *Terrormolinos*, although he failed to rate **Beyond**'s *Sorderon's Shadow* quite as highly as the Mike Singleton Midnight trilogy which it vaguely resembled. On the other hand he gave a Smash to *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* from **Mosaic/Level 9**.

And that just about brings us up to date. So what characterises 1985 as a software year? One thing that stands out to my mind is the way that this summer software kept on coming out, and good software too. 3D has been almost an obsession with many programmers working in all its aspects and proving that last year's 'comprehensive'







DECEMBER

Last month is still fresh in everyone's minds, so I won't dwell too long on its bright points, which were numerous. At last *Tau Ceti* arrived and Smashed, **Sandy White** (of *Ant Attack* fame) gave us **Electric Dreams**' Smash *I, of the Mask*. In similar visual vein, **Melbourne House** came up with *Gyroscope* and got a Smash. **Microsphere** surprised us with the quiet release of their skool follow up, *Back to Skool* and proved you can add even to a fabulous program and get another Smash. **Durell** got one as well with their *Critical Mass*, and at long, long last **Digital Integration** brought out *Tomahawk* — the game we waited almost 18 months to see. This flight simulator showed some ad vances over *Fighter Pilot* and

3D article is way out of date! Gameplay has been worked on very carefully too, supporting our earlier optimistic view that computer games would not die, only improve and change their nature. But to balance the increasing complexity of games like *Dun Darach* and *Frankie Goes to Hollywood*, we've also seen the rebirth of the classic shoot em up — except the graphics have been vastly improved over earlier efforts. Software prices have crept up of course, but budget software has come of age with **Mastertronic** leading the way, and on the pricier end of the range, we've generally been given much more for our money to make up for it.

Some software houses have disappeared — or been swallowed up or revamped, **Bug-Byte** for instance, one of the oldest companies, has just re-emerged as a budget label for Argus Press Software, having been bought out of receivership. Some well known names like **Artic** and, sadly, **Micromega** seem to have faded into the background and some companies have dropped out wilfully, like the sadly missed **Games Workshop**, who after toying with some games and producing some excellent material, chose to get out of software altogether. But new names have emerged, often with startlingly strong product.

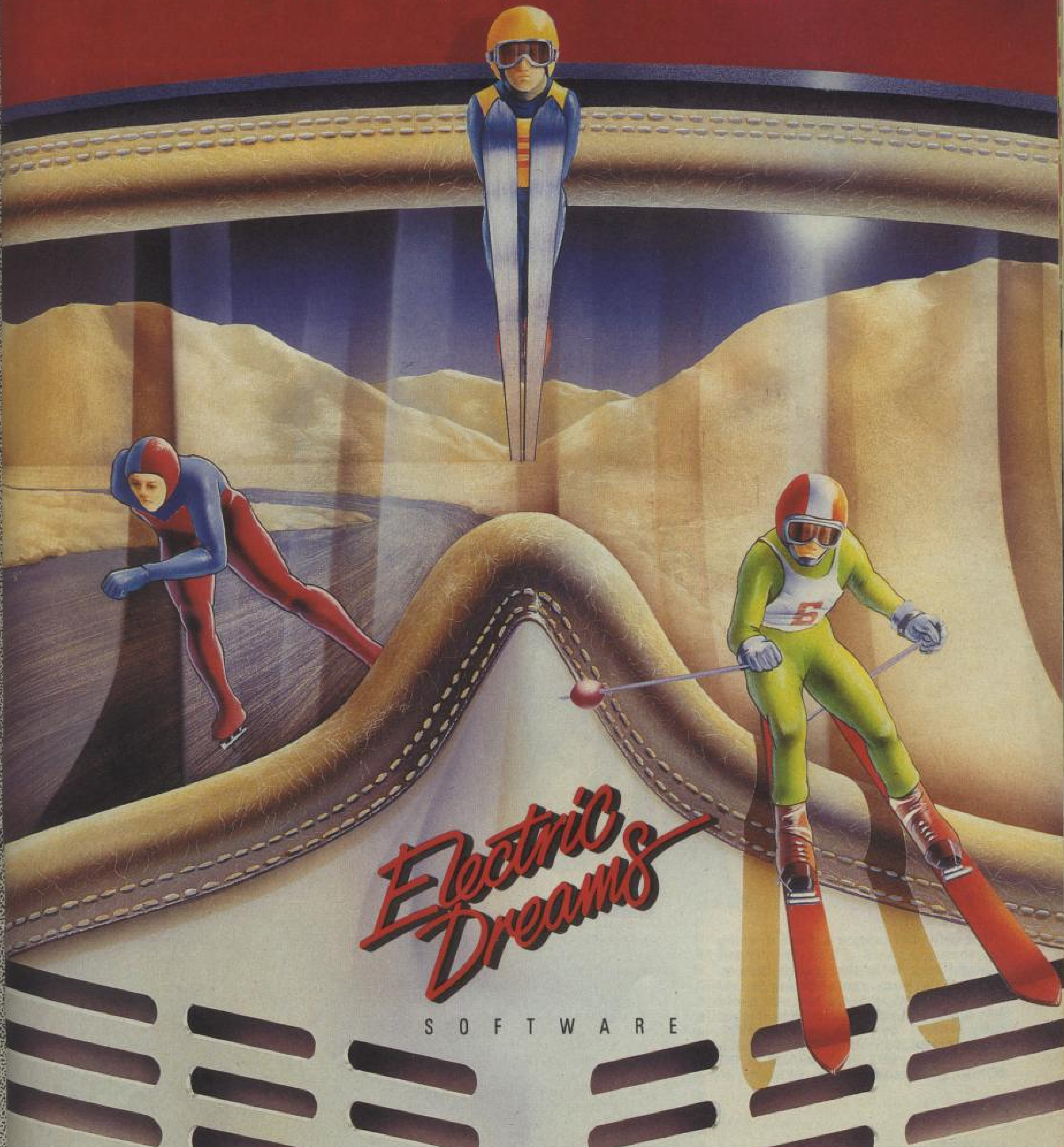
This year has also seen the growth of professional programming design teams like **Denton Designs** and **The Electronic Pencil Company**, who write games but don't market them, leaving that to software houses who buy their talent in. In itself this is a fine idea, leaving the designers to concentrate on doing what they are best at — designing good games. I would say 1985 has been a vinatge year for the quality and range of games, and current trends bode well for 1986. Games in the pipeline are promising indeed — we still await *Zoids* from **Martech** as I write — and the software business seems content with the results and hopeful of next year.

We wait with bated breath . . .

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It's amazing what you have to do nowadays, when you work for a company as a Publicity Person. I mean, there was Melbourne House's PAULA BYRNE (she's Wonderful), sitting quietly in the office one day, pondering what she should do to promote the whizzo new wrestling game Big Daddy's Rock'n Wrestle when in stepped the man himself . . . In full wrestling gear.

"Aha", said a passing photographer. And "Oho" as an idea crossed his mind. And before Paula could finish writing the press release telling people about the 25 different wrestling moves contained in the game, she found herself in a corridor, with Big Daddy's arm round her neck being snapped by the superkeen lensman for a publicity shot.

Then it was back to the office for Paula, to add the paragraph about the ten opponents you meet in the game and the rock sound track that plays along while you wrestle. All in the the working day of your average Melbourne House Publicity Person, you understand.

And now the photo has been developed, printed and sent to sunny Ludlow. Paula, you see, was a bit stuck as to how to caption it. So she decided to offer one set of Melbourne House's complete works to the writer of the best caption for the photie. And fifty copies of the game BIG DADDY'S ROCK 'N WRESTLE will go to the runners up. So if you think you're the wittiest person alive, here's your chance to cash in on your talent.

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ks of Melbourne House for the Spectrum



So. Now you know. When it comes to prancing around on camels, Lawrence of Arabia didn't quite corner the market. STEVE CARGILL, the programmer responsible for the fighting game that has lots of Eastern Promise, FIGHTING WARRIOR, is seen here dressed in his Mum's best curtains atop a camel. (After that BIG DADDY snap, Ms Byrne of Melbourne House had to get her own back on someone, didn't she!)

Quite where he found a camel in North London still remains a mystery, but no matter. Your faithful Competition Minion has secured a second Caption Competition from the Wonderful PAULA BYRNE of Melbourne House. This time you need to come up with a witty, pithy, snappy comment to pop into Steve's speech bubble.

And as you can see, Steve is looking suitably vicious — maybe he doesn't like camels too much? Whatever the reason for his grimacing, it's up to you to write a little scriptlet which puts words into his mouth (or bubble).

The wittiest bubble filler will win a full set of Melbourne House software for the Spectrum — and of course there are fifty copies of FIGHTING WARRIOR to be won as consolation prizes. You too could be chopping and hacking your way across the desert on a quest to save the princess who's locked away in a pyramid. And all for free.

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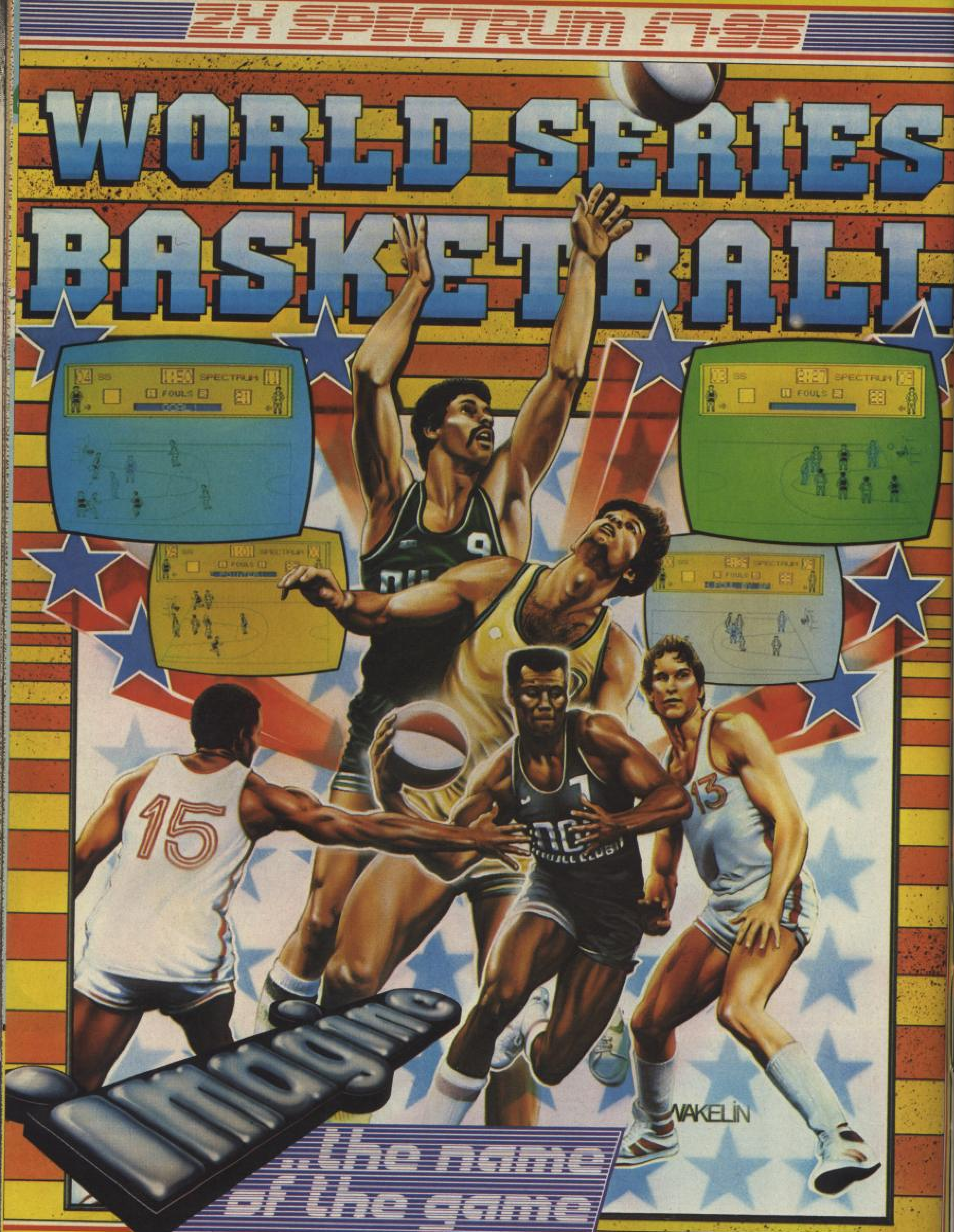
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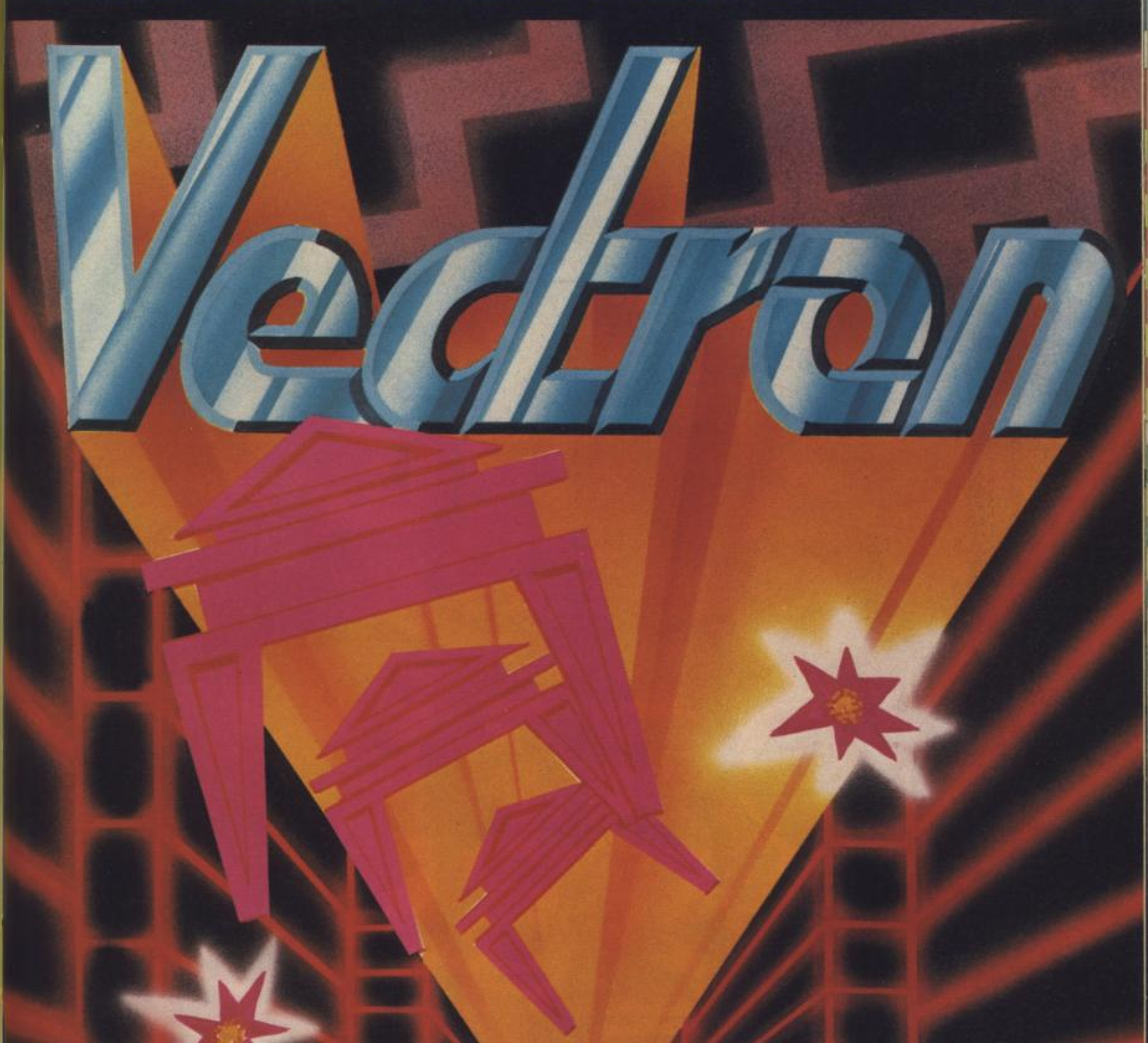
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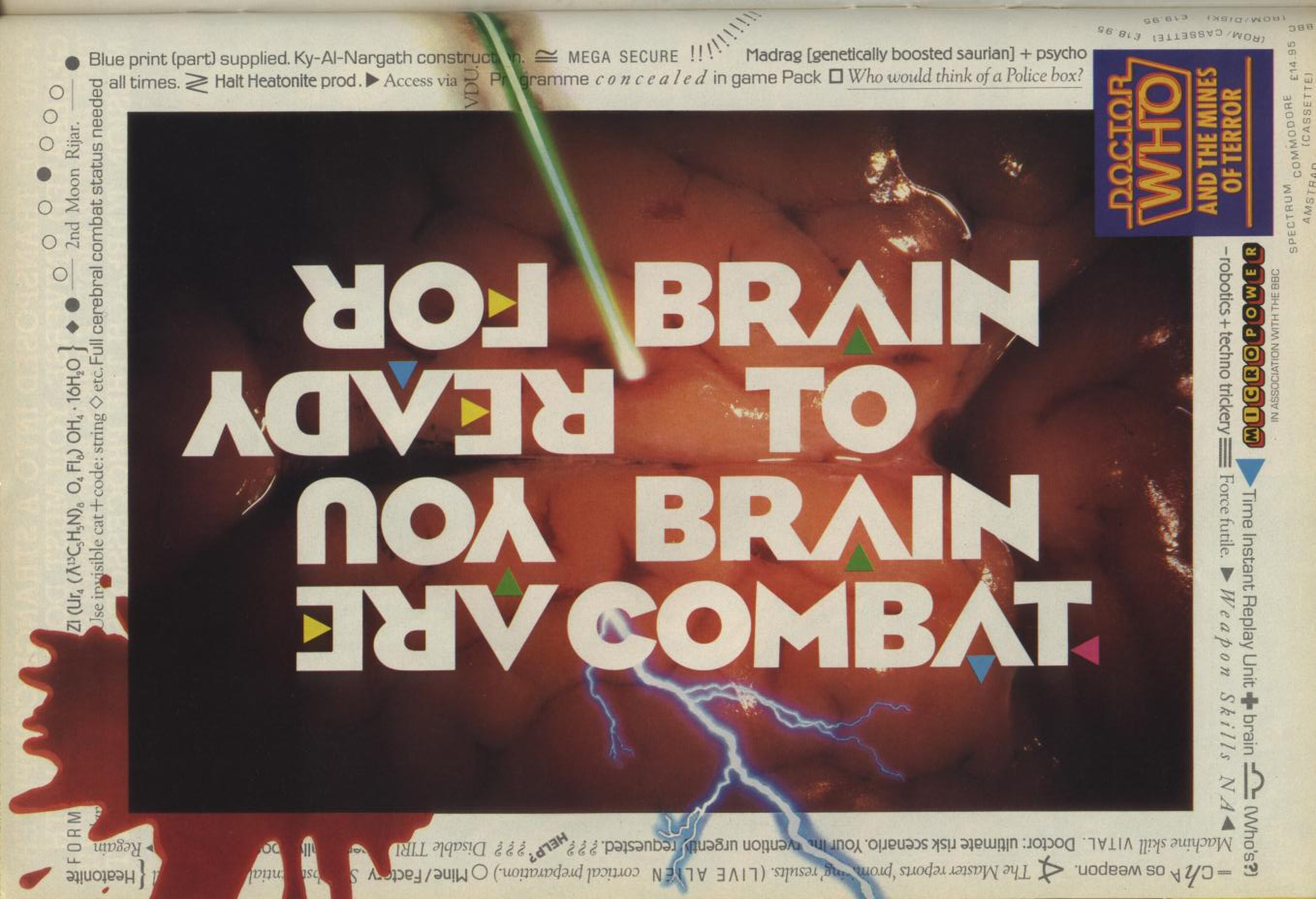
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There are also aliens and robots who could help or hinder your plans. Furrimal for instance, is partial to chocolate, while another needs a battery to be of any use . . .The list is endless! Your clone can pick up and store objects, turn and fire a laser– he can even throw objects across the room! Futuristic graphics plus unique sound through many different scenarios make this the ultimate space adventure movie.

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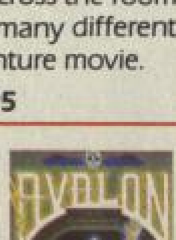
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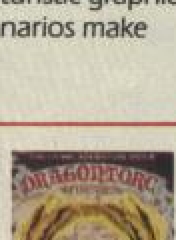
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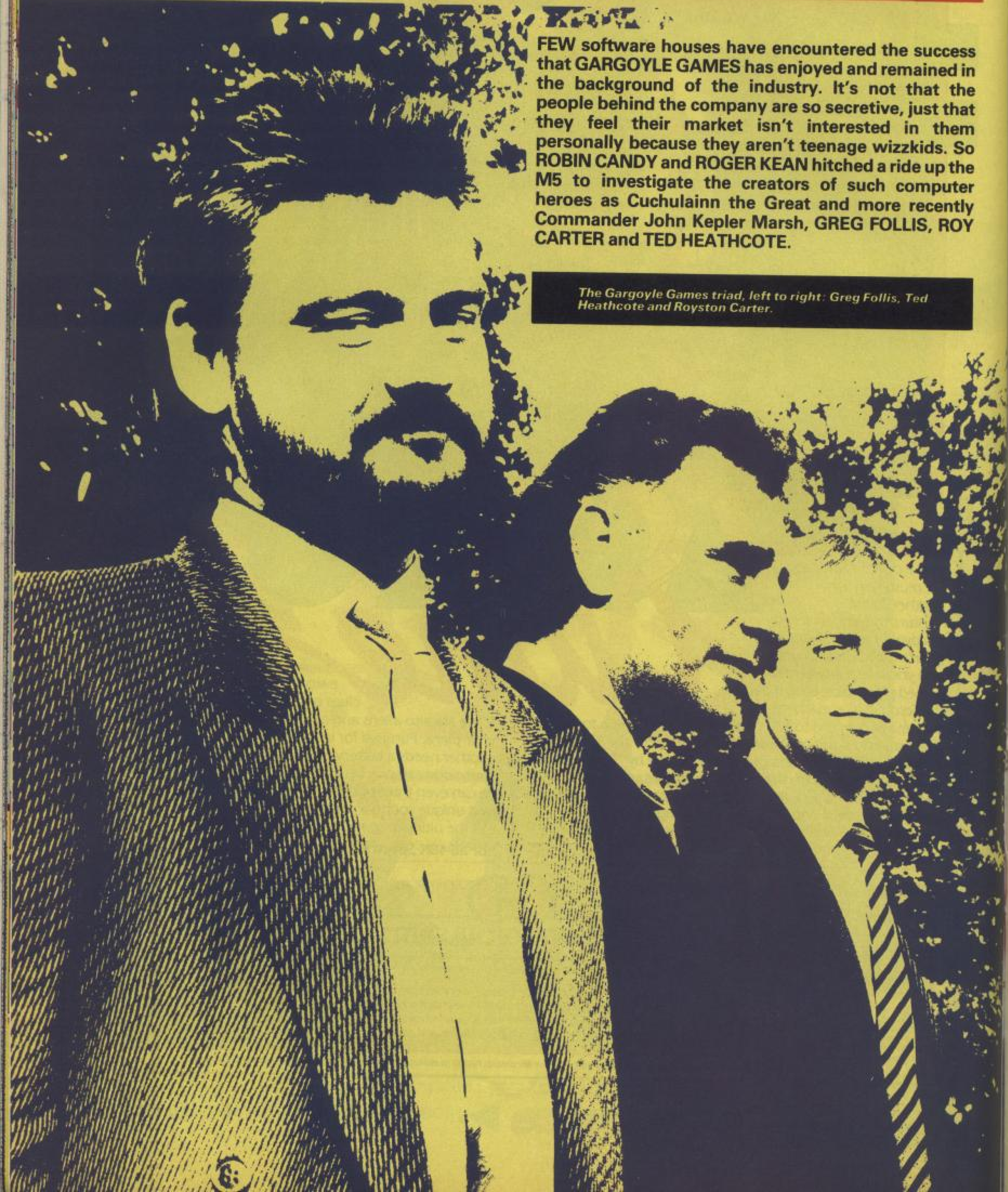


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PLAYING WITH GRANDFATHER'S ABACUS

FEW software houses have encountered the success that GARGOYLE GAMES has enjoyed and remained in the background of the industry. It's not that the people behind the company are so secretive, just that they feel their market isn't interested in them personally because they aren't teenage wizzkids. So ROBIN CANDY and ROGER KEAN hitched a ride up the M5 to investigate the creators of such computer heroes as Cuchulainn the Great and more recently Commander John Kepler Marsh, GREG FOLLIS, ROY CARTER and TED HEATHCOTE.



The Gargoyle Games triad, left to right: Greg Follis, Ted Heathcote and Royston Carter.

King Street, Dudley *is unprepossessing and busy. Far from being some gilded cathedral to computer art, complete with gruesome figurines attached to the high corners, the headquarters of Gargoyle Games is on the third floor of a modest, four-floor brick and concrete office block with an insurance company just below it and the smell of disinfectant haunting the cold stairways. The space consists of an office for Ted, who does the selling, a writing room for Greg and Roy, and a stock room with some games and boxes of toys. The toys are important.*

The computer industry has always been associated with wizzkids who discovered computers overnight and made a fortune but Gargoyle Games' graduation into the home computer market has been a different pan of chips altogether. It all started about seventeen years ago in a computer research department where Royston (his full name, though Roy will do) and Greg worked for a large services bureau. This entailed them working at the larger end of the computer market and gradually throughout the years they've come down in machine size, though Greg admits that the mini computers they worked on weren't necessarily more powerful than the home micros today.

'The first one I started on,' he says, 'had the same power as an Amstrad and wouldn't have fit in this room, it was an 8K machine, an ICL 1901. It was very slow. We used to play Grandfather's Abacus on it. That's how it all started, I suppose,' he adds, referring to games.

'No you were hatched,' quips Roy disproving the myth that Greg is the only one with an operative larynx. In fact listening to these two is like watching two stand-up comedians.

'I started on computers at a company called Hewitts,' continues an unperturbed Greg Follis. 'I was employed by them as a programmer in the central computer. I worked as a programmer for a few years until they decided my talents might be more usefully employed in analysis. I asked "What's the money like?" They said, "It's better," so I said, "I'm an analyst"'. Greg's new job brought him more into contact with Roy. 'When we started, we didn't like each other very much, I can't remember why — well I can, I can remember exactly . . . '

'It was nothing to do with you at all,' snaps back Roy.

'You didn't like me!

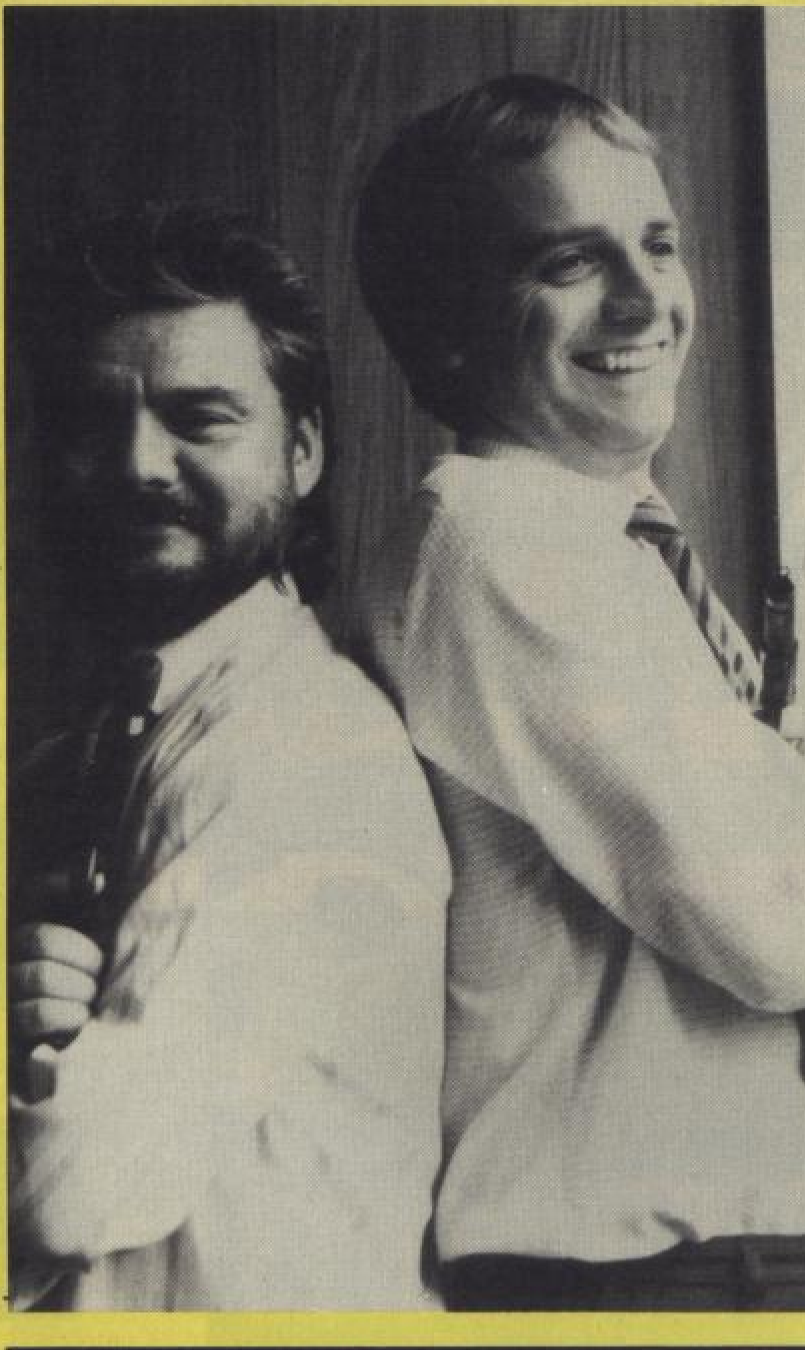
'That's right, and you didn't like me!'

Having established this hate relationship, they ended up getting together over a computer program and decided what everyone knew all along — they liked each other, and because they had a lot of fun working on the program they decided that if they could be in the same department it would mean that they could have a lot more fun. So they developed a brillant scheme.

'We invented this new department called New Products-Research and Development,' continues Greg, 'The management said, "What a great idea! You can make up new products", which of course we never did. We actually got our own office, I suspect simply because we had a lot of fun and made a lot of noise which never actually stopped us with the work we were doing, but stopped everybody else working. But we had an awful lot of fun, more fun than we have now. We did eventually write some very good programs for them in the end, one of which was fairly important, which they've just started selling, something that we felt should have been sold three or four years ago.'

They had been working for the company for around 15 years when press rumours that teenage 'programmers' were earning fortunes prodded their own feelings about getting on and prompted them to turn their attention to games outside daily business work. At this point Ted Heathcote, long term friend of Greg's, was roped in to sell games for the envisaged firm and book advertising. Feeling that they could duplicate the standard of software presently on the market without any massive financial (or time) commitment of any sort they dived straight in at the deep end with their first game Ad Astra*.*

'The thing that actually attracted us to games was that it was a method to make money that we could afford,' says Greg. 'We both have mortgages and commitments that you can't throw away. We couldn't have done it any other way because we simply didn't have the backing. We had been involved in business, though, and knew some of the pitfalls. At the time we were still working in the New Products Department, so Ad Astra *was developed in our spare time. Consequently it took nine months to develop which was an appalingly long time. We could put* Ad Astra *together in a few weeks nowadays.'*



Follis and Carter in playful mood — the guns are for sniping passing security guards.

Ad Astra *was released when CRASH was still a fledgling magazine and it was a mild surprise to find a young, promising software house so near to home. The game rated 80% with particular recognition of the Graphics, which at time were stunning. As soon as* Ad Astra *was released work on* Tir Na Nog *began. Contrary to popular belief,* Tir Na Nog*'s origins do not lie in Fighting Fantasy.*

'One day after releasing Ad Astra *I wrote this routine which showed a character walking in a scrolling background,' Roy recalls. Greg thought it 'looked nice', so then they looked around for a scenario which fitted the character.*

'Eventually we found Cuchulainn and so Tir Na Nog *was born.'*

With the exception of Ad Astra*, all of Gargoyle's games have carefully worked out plots which lend an almost unique atmosphere to the game. It is this atmosphere and the intricate problems that make games like* Marsport *classics.*

'The apparent literary content of our storylines comes about simply because we enjoy reading stories,' Greg says modestly. 'We make stories that we enjoy. We make stories that seem to be the tip of the iceberg, so you always have the impression that there was a lot more going on that you didn't know about, and the resultant effect is that you are completing the story as you complete the game, something like a movie where the outcome is up to you. That is what we're aiming for, a true computer movie that is realistic. And we like to think that we achieve that in our games. I think a lot of adventure type stuff needs a story behind it, and fantasy material like Lord of the Rings*, can provide an ethos to build problems and work out a taxing game.'*

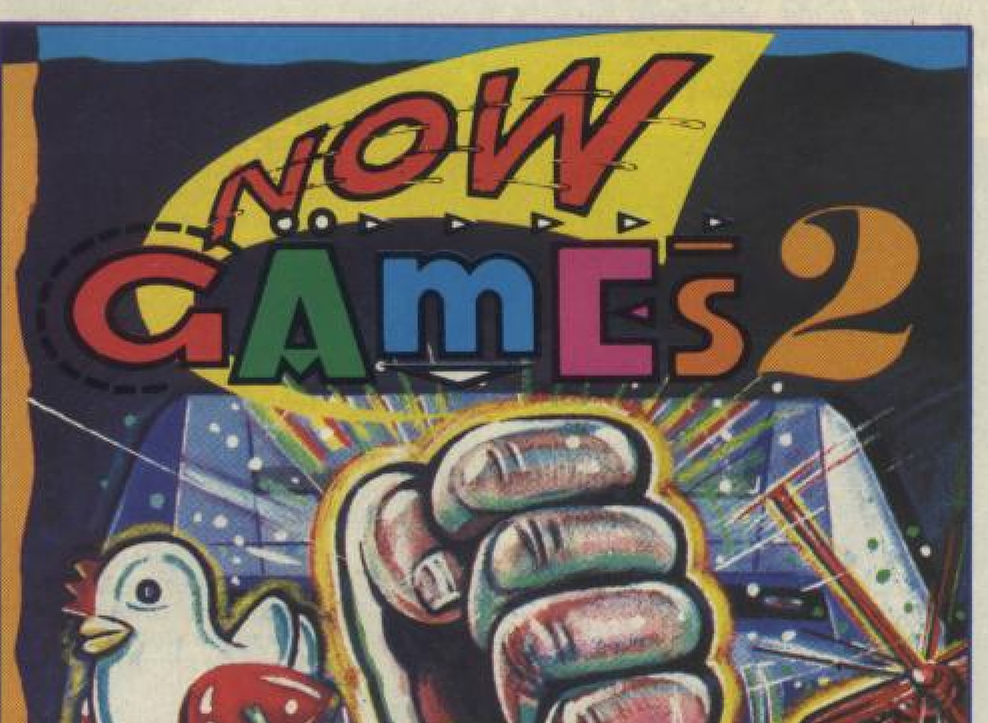
Greg and Roy work closely together. 'We get an idea for a scenario and then make up the problems as we go along, two thirds of the game's ideas are my creation the rest come mainly from Royston. Our next game Sweevo's World*, however, is aimed more at the arcade market but it still fits into the* Marsport†Siege of Earth *trilogy, scenario. The game is intended to a bit of fun. If people play it and say "that was fun" then the game has achieved the purpose for which it was designed. The industry is far too serious now. It needs more fun injected into it, after all it* **is** *an entertainment industry.'*

On the thorny subject of piracy Gargoyle Games have been almost alone in preferring to concentrate on perfecting a program rather than spend the time developing protection routines for it. Roy is quite forceful on this point, especially when it comes to discussing how many potential sales are lost through illegal copying. 'I would suggest

Five Fantastic Games

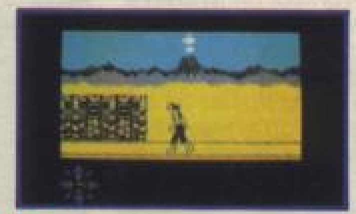
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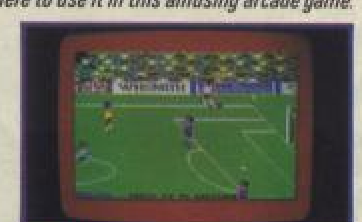
2. TIR NA NOG – Gargoyle Games
This remarkable interactive graphic adventure allows you to play the mythological Celtic, Cuchulainn, searching for the fragments of the Seal of Calum.



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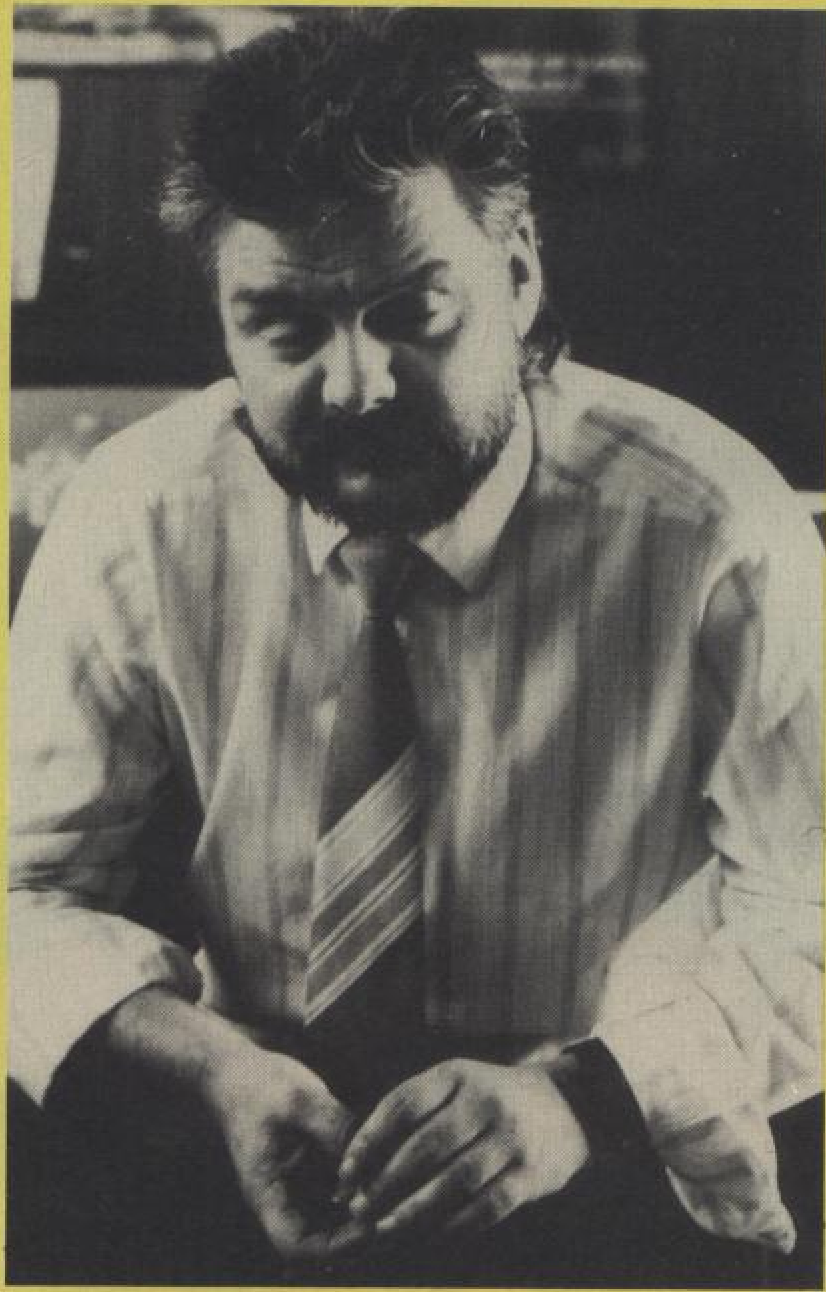
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that we lose 50% of potential sales on every game **not** through piracy but by **not** having adequate PR. That's a fairly reasonable figure. Protection routines are obviously directed towards the odd few hackers that are around, but who cares if they know what your code is? I can't see that it is that important if someone knows what your code is. There is no way of stopping tape-to-tape copying.'

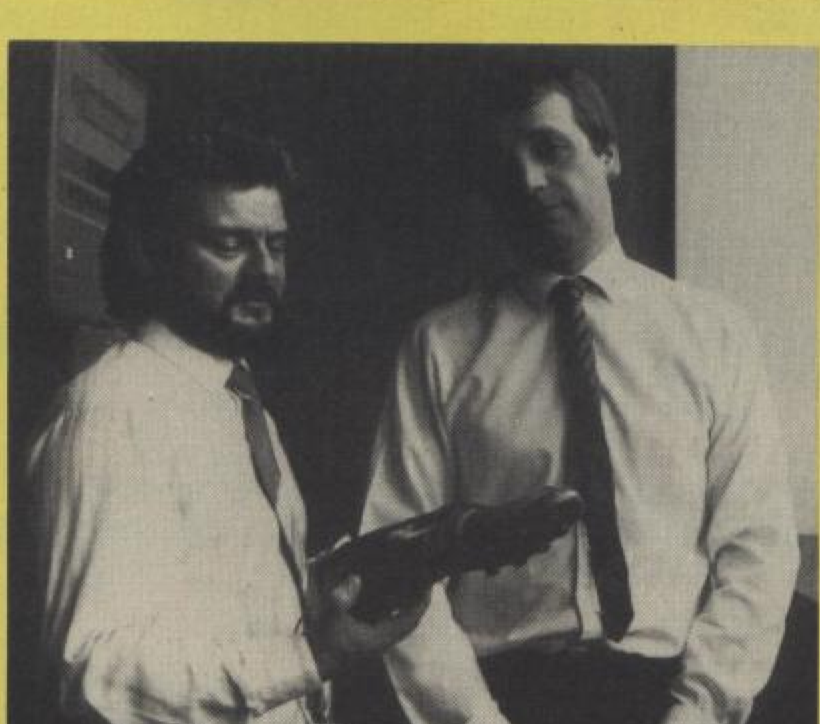
After Sweevo's World Gargoyle intend returning to the more serious game with the second installment in the Siege of Earth trilogy, Fornax. The format for this will be totally different from anything that Gargoyle have done before. Although there will be still be various problems which have to be overcome to complete the game, the presentation will be radically different. Greg suggests that Fornax will probably end up as a mixed media game, perhaps using icons and / or sentence input using semantic analysis of sentences rather than syntactic — this will be quite new. Before starting Gargoyle they had been sent on artificial intelligence courses where they learned certain elements of AI which Greg and Roy now hope to incorporate into later games to form what Greg calls a sort of cross between Dun Darach and 'Crossroads'. But whatever turns up in Fornax you can be sure that it will have plenty of animation and beautiful graphics along with intricate puzzles. Fornax should turn out to be innovative while still being fun, the ingredients Gargoyle feel are necessary to make a hit game.

'There's a lot of new ideas about at the moment,' says Greg. 'It's very difficult, but you have to constantly learn from previous hits released by other software houses. I would be quite happy to turn out Dun Darachs but there's a market out there and say 50% of it is buying Daley Thompson's Decathlon so you've got to go with the market trend. We have plenty of ideas which we know we could develop but time isn't on our side. We've got to release a game every few months in order to live. If we had six months to develop a game we could turn out something at the end of that time that would demolish the competition but we've all got mortgages to pay. In order to translate our ideas into software form we would probably need a Spectrum 349!

'Before we can develop true mega games we have to expand, to employ a few people to take away the things that take up so much of our time — a person to answer the phones would be a real boon as would someone to write some of the less complex but time-consuming routines in our games. There is also the possibility of us stopping the manufacturing side and becoming a development house similar to Denton Designs,' he says looking wistfully at Roy and Ted. 'That isn't a bad idea, it would take out the task of PR straight away.'



The wicked glint in Greg Follis' eye tells you where those puzzles come from.



'Tell him about the football boot, Greg.'



Mention of Denton Designs leads us to talk about the old Imagine and the state of the post-boom industry. Gargoyle entered the games industry shortly before the crash of Imagine but even though doom and gloom is spouted by the media they believe computer games are here to stay.

'I Don't think that computer games are a fad, they're an industry,' Roy claims. 'It's like TVs and videos are not a fad, it is all encompassed by the electronic entertainment industry and will always be maintained. Eventually Newsfield may not publish magazines but someone will. The industry may change, for example video shops may become laser holograph lenders, the medium will change but the concept of electronic entertainment will continue because it's big business and you can be sure that we will be helping it along.'

To relieve the tension of programming and planning ahead, the backroom of the office is dedicated to toys. The remnants of their programming days with Hewitts litter the floor in boxes of varying sizes, guns of differing calibre wait to be fired once in a while at passing security guards.

'We used to have terrific fun with these,' Greg laughs, holding up a tatty football boot.

'Tell them about the football boot, Greg,' Roy prompts. Greg glances at it as though surprised to see it in his hand.

'Ah, the football boots. A professor friend of ours sent us a pair of football boots (don't know why), which we promptly sent back. He then gave us a load of clues as to their whereabouts which eventually led to us going to Ibiza to dig up a football boot. We will have to hide this one and give him a set of clues to find it again.'

Leaving the tiny offices, with their disinfectant-smelling stairways and a playroom full of mechanical fly swatters, whoopee cushions and toy guns, I am left with the distinct impression that it is their creators and not Cuchulainn and Marsh who are truly the heroes. The spirit of the software industry lies in such small but professional outfits who, by hard work and excellent products, are leading the way towards an electronic environment where reality and fantasy will be indistinguishable. It may not have been a world-shattering event, but for the Spectrum and computer games in general, the hatching of the Gargoyle was a truly remarkable event.

Robin Candy, with help from Roger Kean who held his CRASH cap and took the pictures when told.



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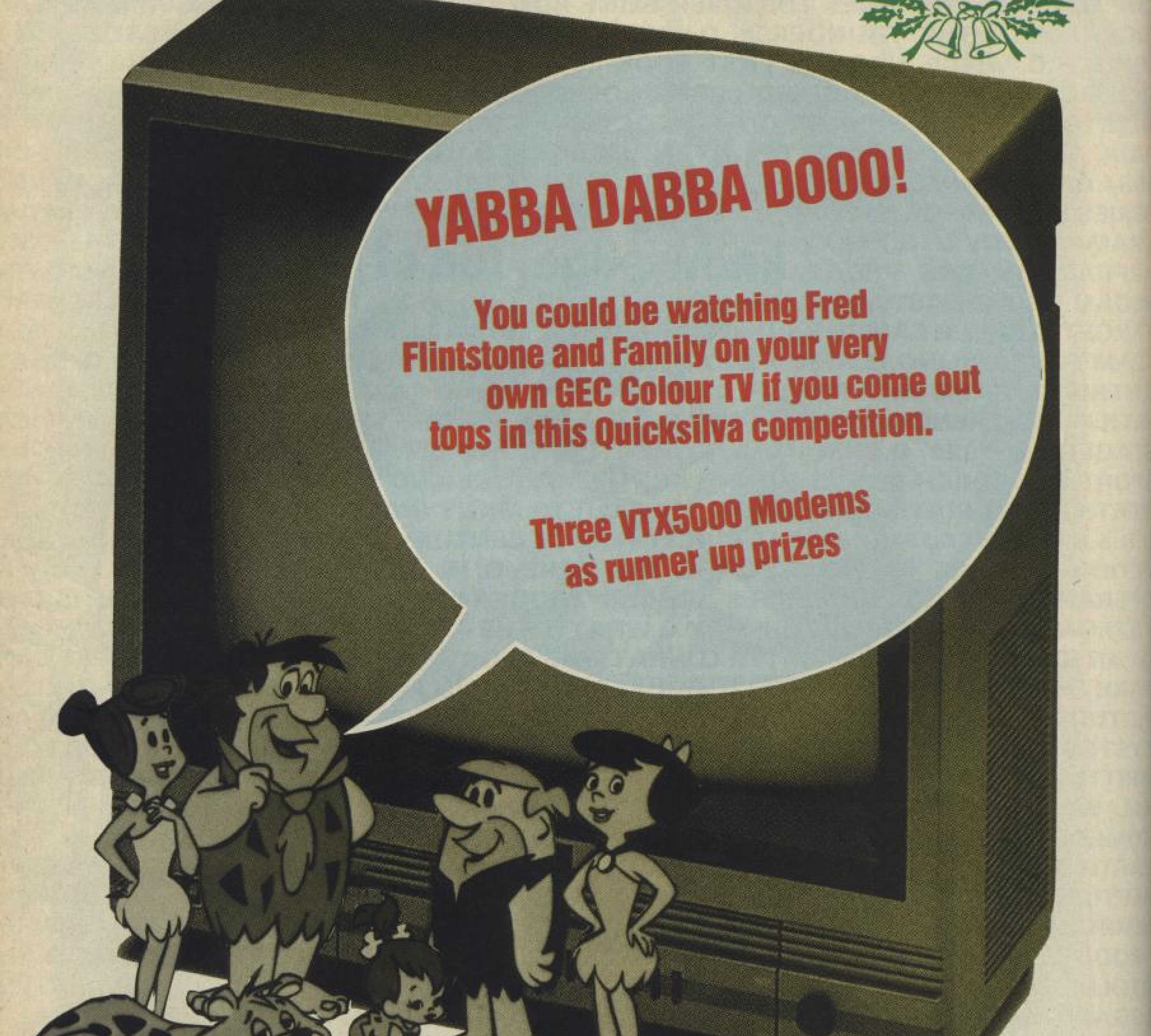
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Crash Competition

Monster prizes to be won in the Quicksilva FRED FLINTSTONE Comp



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In Quicksilva's latest game, Fred Flintstone is desperately trying to build a home in Bedrock so he can lure his loved one, Wilma, into marriage and thus set up the family we have all come to know and love.

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But once he's made his home, Fred will need a home computer won't he? And that's where you come in . . . If you want to enter this competition and stand a chance of winning a super GEC colour telly, or a modem, or even one of the twenty five copies of the game Quicksilva are offering as prizes, you'll have to design a suitably prehistoric computer for Fred to play games on.

So get your book of Prehistoric Rock Computer Components down from the bookshelf, collect together your Stone Age Electronics Magazines, and get thinking. Design a computer for Fred and Family that would fit in with his lifestyle and send your technical drawing, painting or full four hundred page specification in to FRED's COMPUTER, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January 1986. Our very own in-house Neanderthal Techno-Boffin, Mr Gary Liddon will put down his club, leave his lunch, and judge the competition on that day.


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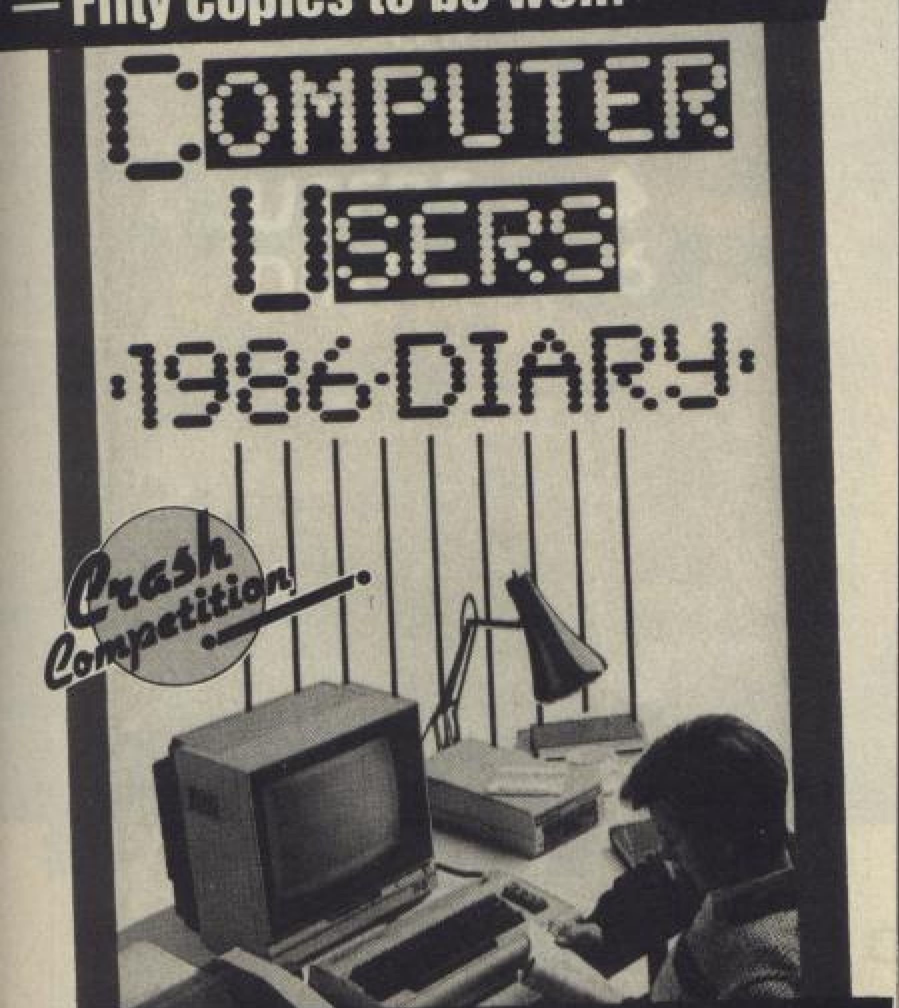
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The nice people at Letts (who are fairly famous for making diaries, amongst other things) have decided to give fifty CRASH readers the chance of coping with all the important things they're going to be doing in 1986. They've launched a diary for computer users, which is an elegant, slim booklet ideal for popping into a coat pocket. Not only is there plenty of space for noting down all your important appointments, but a handy section at the front gives information on all sorts of aspects of computing.

There's a section on computer languages, another on word processors, advice on buying a home computer and lots of valuable snippets of information for you to comb through and carry round with you all year.

But there's more still. Top prize in this competition is a full set of Letts KEYFACTS Revision Software — eight packages of revision software ideal for anyone taking O Levels or CSE exams. The subjects covered are: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Studies, English Literature, Geography, Mathematics and Physics. You could become a real smart cookie!

What we want you to do, is to write the entries that a schoolbeing of the 21st century might make in a Lett's Diary in 2186. It'll get the old grey matter working after an overdose of Christmas Pud — and you could start 1986 in a very organised way!

HURRY, HURRY, HURRY, though. As the prizes for this comp are in fact diaries for 1986, we'll be drawing this competition a little earlier than the others in this issue. Whizz your entries in DIARY COMPETITION, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 3rd January. (*That's the evil Kidd's Birthday, by the way, so we'll make him draw the competition as a present! HEE HEE — COMP MINION*).



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from ROBIN CANDY

AND THEN THERE WERE POKES

This is what you've all been waiting for, the Christmas Pokes Special with all the handy cheats that should help you out. DON'T use any of these routines if you think they might spoil your enjoyment of these games.

About a year ago I made my debut in CRASH with a Pokes article similar to this one. Those were the days when Hyperloads were few and far between and you could MERGE games to put routines for cheating in; nowadays the routines are much bigger and resemble mini listings. This little lot of pokes is approximately 25K long whereas a year ago they would have only taken up 2K at the most. It is a bit of a shame that you have to go to such lengths just to cheat. Some may say that you shouldn't have to cheat, but the average game player finds most games a bit difficult. Anyway it looks as if the Hyperloads are here to stay and you will have to endure long listings. There shouldn't be any errors in the listings especially the long ones — they've all been checked. Special thanks to Keith Walker **and** Phil Churchyard **without whom this pokes special wouldn't be possible.**

HALLS OF THE THINGS

This Design Design game is quite old now and it was probably the first game with protection on it. Anyway these pokes should help if you're still stuck.

```
1 REM POKES FOR THE THINGS
10 CLEAR 65535: POKE 23658,8: LET F = 65024
20 PRINT AT 8,6; "DO YOU WISH INFINITE"; AT 12,13; "Y/N"
40 PRINT AT 10,12; "MAGIC"
50 GOSUB 1000
60 IF A$ = "Y" THEN RESTORE 200: GOSUB 2000
70 PRINT AT 10,12; "ENERGY"
80 GOSUB 1000
90 IF A$ = "Y" THEN RESTORE 210: GOSUB 2000
100 PRINT AT 10,12; "ARROWS"
110 GOSUB 1000
120 IF A$ = "Y" THEN RESTORE 220: GOSUB 2000
130 RESTORE 230: GOSUB 2000
135 CLS: PRINT AT 9,7; "START HALLS TAPE"
140 POKE 23570, 16: LOAD "" CODE 61263
150 POKE 61725, 254
160 POKE 65533, 240: POKE 65532,0
170 STOP
200 DATA 6, 175, 50, 3, 1, 30, 50, 100, 131
210 DATA 3, 175, 50, 205, 127
220 DATA 3, 175, 50, 221, 126
230 DATA 2, 195, 0, 96
1000 IF INKEY$ <> "" THEN GOTO 1000
1010 LET A$ = INKEY$: IF A$ = "Y" OR A$ = "N" THEN RETURN
1020 GOTO 1010
2000 READ A: FOR F = F TO F + A: READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F: RETURN
```

INFINITE ARROWS MAGIC ENERGY

WHEELIE

Wheelie is now one of the all time classics, if you haven't got it yet then rush out and buy one! Even though it has been out a long time now, this is the only set of pokes that I have received for it. These give you infinite lives. Type in the listing and save it to tape for future use. If you get an error in data report then check that you have entered all the data properly.

```
5 REM WHEELIE POKES
10 LET C = 0: FOR A = 23296 TO 23340: READ B: POKE A,B: LET C = C + B: NEXT A
20 IF <> 5024 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA": STOP
30 RANDOMIZE USR 23300
40 DATA 175, 50, 21, 91, 49, 0, 0
50 DATA 221, 33, 111, 63, 17, 145, 27
60 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 48, 234
70 DATA 221, 33, 108, 98, 17, 125, 152
80 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 48, 242
90 DATA 62, 201, 50, 85, 117, 195, 30, 109
```

FULL THROTTLE

These pokes prevent you from slowing down plus they allow you to pass through the other riders.

```
5 REM FULL THROTTLE POKES
10 CLEAR 65535: FOR A = 23296 TO 23311: READ B: POKE A,B: NEXT A
20 RANDOMIZE USR 23296: LET A = 60232
30 READ B: POKE A,B: LET A = A + 1: IF B <> 233 THEN GOTO 30
40 RANDOMIZE USR 60018
50 DATA 221, 33, 85, 234, 17
60 DATA 160, 1, 62, 255, 55
70 DATA 205, 86, 5, 48, 241
80 DATA 201, 175, 50, 105, 176
90 DATA 62, 201, 50, 43, 189
100 DATA 233
```

AVALON

For infinite energy follow this procedure:
After MERGEing the program enter POKE 23782, 2: POKE 23876, 201: POKE 23878, 204: POKE 23879, 227: GOTO 0 then restart tape

WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA

These pokes appeared a couple of months back but there was a slight error in them. So here they are in their correct form.

```
10 CLEAR 25383: LOAD "" CODE 25384
20 FOR A = 23296 TO 23307: READ B: POKE A,B: NEXT A
30 RANDOMIZE USR 23296: CLEAR 29999: NEW
40 DATA 17, 48, 117, 1, 194, 101, 33, 88, 152, 237, 176, 201
```

When the 'Sinclair Research Ltd' message appears on screen then enter these pokes.

POKE 35443,0 for infinite droids
POKE 35303,0: POKE 33221,O for infinite energy
POKE 30008,201 this stops the ship from sinking when there is too much water in it.
Then RANDOMIZE USR 31000 to start the game.

CAVERN FIGHTER

Yet another golden oldie which is a surprisingly good version of the arcade oldie Scramble. For those of you who have got the game just enter this program to get infinite lives.

```
5 REM CAVERN FIGHTER
10 LOAD "" CODE: POKE 23380, 201: RANDOMIZE USR 23360
20 POKE 31683, 0: POKE 31684, 0: RANDOMIZE USR 32656
```

start tape from start

JSW II

This isn't a favourite game of mine but it does seem that fans of the original game rate part two. Listed below is a routine to get infinite lives, SAVE it to tape with GOTO 100.

```
5 REM JSW II POKES
10 CLEAR 63999
20 FOR F = 64000 TO 64053
30 READ A: POKE F,A
40 NEXT F
45 PRINT FLASH 1; "PLAY JSW II TAPE FROM START"
50 RANDOMIZE USR 64000
60 DATA 49, 200, 250, 221, 33, 0, 0, 17, 136, 0, 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 48, 238
70 DATA 221, 33, 0, 64, 17, 56, 185, 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
80 DATA 33, 46, 250, 17, 197, 100, 1, 8, 0, 237, 176
90 DATA 243, 195, 0, 95, 62, 195, 50, 22, 122, 195, 0, 112
100 SAVE "LOADER" LINE 10
```

MONTY ON THE RUN

Definitely a nasty follow up to Monty Mole, so if you're having any problems key in this routine.

```
5 REM MOLE 2 POKES
10 PRINT AT 9, 2; "ENTER NO OF LIVES (6 TO 255)"
20 INPUT A$: BEEP .1, 1
30 IF A$ = "" THEN GO TO 20
40 FOR B = 1 TO LEN A$
50 IF A$ (B) < "0" OR A$ (B) > "9" THEN GO TO 20: NEXT B
60 LET LIVES = VAL A$
70 IF LIVES < 6 OR LIVES > 255 THEN GO TO 20
80 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 0: CLS
90 PRINT INK 7; AT 9, 3; "PLAY IN MONTY MASTER TAPE"; AT 11, 9; "FROM THE START"
100 LOAD "" CODE
110 POKE 63559, 79
120 POKE 63563, 83
130 POKE 63574, 13
140 POKE 63575, 249
150 POKE 63722, 7
160 FOR N = 63757 TO 63792: READ A: POKE N, A: NEXT N
170 RANDOMIZE USR 63520
180 DATA 033, 027, 249, 017, 000
190 DATA 064, 001, 022, 000, 237
200 DATA 176, 195, 000, 064, 033
210 DATA 255, 247, 017, 255, 255
220 DATA 001, 000, 165, 237, 184
230 DATA 049, 255, 095, 062, LIVES
240 DATA 050, 127, 152, 195, 099
250 DATA 169
```

SPYHUNTER

One of Denton Designs' US Gold conversions has attracted a routine to gain infinite lives. Follow the usual procedure of typing in the listing and SAVEing it to tape for future use. Then RUN it and start the *Spy Hunter* tape from the beginning. If you have made a mistake in your data tape in put then the computer will come back with an error message.

```
5 REM SPY HUNTER POKES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 9, 1;"PLAY IN SPY HUNTER MASTER TAPE";AT 11, 9;"FROM THE START"
30 RESTORE
40 LET TOT = 0
50 FOR N = 65024 TO 65114: READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A: NEXT N
60 IF TOT <> 9438 THEN PRINT AT 0, 0; "ERROR IN DATA": STOP
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65024
100 DATA 237, 091, 083, 092, 042
110 DATA 089, 092, 043, 205, 229
120 DATA 025, 221, 033, 128, 254
130 DATA 017, 017, 000, 175, 055
140 DATA 205, 086, 005, 042, 083
150 DATA 092, 237, 075, 139, 254
160 DATA 205, 085, 022, 042, 083
170 DATA 092, 237, 091, 143, 254
180 DATA 025, 034, 075, 092, 221
190 DATA 042, 083, 092, 237, 091
200 DATA 139, 254, 062, 255, 055
210 DATA 205, 086, 005, 042, 083
220 DATA 092, 017, 253, 003, 025
230 DATA 235, 033, 086, 254, 001
240 DATA 005, 000, 237, 176, 033
250 DATA 000, 000, 034, 066, 092
260 DATA 062, 001, 050, 068, 092
270 DATA 201, 120, 074, 108, 098
280 DATA 144
```

NIGHTSHADE

This routine gives infinite lives for *Ultimate's* recent release. Though it wasn't their best game it is a mappers delight.

```
5 REM NIGHT POKES
10 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 0: CLS
20 PRINT AT 9, 1; INK 7;"PLAY IN NIGHTSHADE MASTER TAPE"; AT 11, 9;"FROM THE START"
30 FOR N = 1 TO 5
40 PRINT AT 19, 0: LOAD "" CODE
50 NEXT N
60 POKE 52660, 240
70 POKE 52661, 224
80 POKE 52700, 176
90 POKE 52701, 176
100 POKE 52730, 160
110 POKE 52731, 240
120 POKE 52732, 7
130 POKE 52733, 4
140 PRINT USR 23424
```

TAPPER

This another poke that originally appeared a number of months ago. Though it wasn't printed wrong it only worked if Interface 1 was attached. If you don't possess an Interface 1 then the following routine will allow you to have infinite lives . .

```
5 REM TAPPER POKES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 9, 3; "PLAY IN TAPPER MASTER TAPE"; AT 11,9; "FROM THE START"
30 RESTORE
40 LET TOT = 0
50 FOR N = 23296 TO 23395: READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A: POKE N, A: NEXT N
60 IF TOT <> 9545 THEN PRINT AT 0, 0; "ERROR IN DATA": STOP
70 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
100 DATA 237, 091, 083, 092, 042
110 DATA 089, 092, 043, 205, 229
120 DATA 025, 006, 003, 197, 221
130 DATA 033, 128, 091, 017, 017
140 DATA 000, 175, 055, 205, 086
150 DATA 005, 193, 016, 240, 042
160 DATA 083, 092, 237, 075, 139
170 DATA 091, 205, 085, 022, 042
180 DATA 083, 092, 237, 091, 143
190 DATA 091, 025, 034, 075, 092
200 DATA 221, 042, 083, 092, 237
210 DATA 091, 139, 091, 062, 255
220 DATA 055, 205, 086, 005, 042
230 DATA 083, 092, 017, 244, 003
240 DATA 025, 235, 033, 092, 091
250 DATA 001, 008, 000, 237, 176
260 DATA 033, 000, 000, 034, 066
270 DATA 092, 062, 001, 050, 068
280 DATA 092, 201, 013, 197, 245
290 DATA 090, 028, 023, 002, 213
```

If you have the old routine then merge this with it to get it to work.

```
50 FOR = 23296 TO 23395: READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A: POKE N, A: NEXT N
60 IF TOT <> 9545 THEN PRINT AT 0, 0; "ERROR IN DATA": STOP
220 DATA 055, 205, 086, 005, 042
225 DATA 083, 092, 017, 244, 003
230 DATA 025, 235, 033, 092, 091
```

AD ASTRA

Gargoyle Games' original hit has at last got some pokes for it. Just use this routine to gain infinite lives.

```
5 REM AD ASTRA POKES
10 CLEAR 24490
20 LOAD "" SCREEN$
30 LOAD "" CODE
40 LOAD "" CODE
50 POKE 35852, 0: POKE 35853, 0
60 POKE 35854, 0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 33000
```

NIGHTSHADE

This set of pokes get rid of the nasties except for the four main creatures and the fireball.

```
1 REM NIGHTSHADE POKES
5 CLS
10 RESTORE
20 LET TOT = 0
30 FOR I = 23296 TO 23430
40 READ A
50 LET TOT = TOT + A
60 POKE I, A
70 NEXT I
80 IF TOT <> 12907 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!!!": BEEP 1, 50: STOP
90 PRINT AT 0, 0; "START NIGHTSHADE TAPE.ANY KEY . . .": PAUSE 1: PAUSE 0
100 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
1000 DATA 49, 255, 255, 175, 211
1010 DATA 254, 33, 0, 64, 17
1020 DATA 1, 64, 54, 0, 1
1030 DATA 0, 27, 237, 176, 205
1040 DATA 122, 91, 62, 255, 55
1050 DATA 221, 33, 0, 0, 17
1060 DATA 136, 19, 205, 86, 5
1070 DATA 205, 122, 91, 62, 255
1080 DATA 55, 221, 33, 0, 64
1090 DATA 17, 0, 27, 205, 86
1100 DATA 5, 205, 122, 91, 62
1110 DATA 255, 55, 221, 33, 0
1120 DATA 96, 17, 0, 136, 205
1130 DATA 86, 5, 205, 122, 91
1140 DATA 62, 255, 55, 221, 33
1150 DATA 128, 91, 17, 43, 0
1160 DATA 205, 86, 5, 33, 92
1170 DATA 91, 34, 169, 91, 195
1180 DATA 128, 91, 33, 128, 91
1190 DATA 17, 58, 0, 205, 19
1200 DATA 0, 62, 233, 50, 176
1210 DATA 92, 38, 99, 46, 52
1220 DATA 243, 34, 120, 92, 62
1230 DATA 201, 50, 232, 205, 195
1240 DATA 0, 94, 175, 55, 221
1250 DATA 33, 0, 0, 17, 17
1260 DATA 0, 205, 86, 5, 201
```

GYROSCOPE

Melbourne House's latest Smash is one of those games that is in dire need of pokes. So here they are and I'm sure you will all agree that they are VERY useful.

```
5 REM GYROSCOPE POKES
10 BORDER 0: INK 0: PAPER 0: CLS
20 RESTORE
30 LET TOT = 0
40 FOR I = 23296 TO 23379
50 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A + A * PEEK (I-23296)
60 POKE I ,A
70 NEXT I
80 IF TOT <> 1369766 THEN PRINT FLASH 1; INK 7; "ERROR IN DATA!!!": BEEP 1 ,0: STOP
90 INPUT "LIVES (0-255) 0 = INFINITE ?";LIVES
100 IF LIVES THEN POKE 23360 ,LIVES: GO TO 120
110 POKE 23365 ,0
120 INPUT "TIME BEFORE GYROSCOPE STOPS (0-99) 0 = INFINITE ?"; LINE T$
130 LET TIME = VAL T$: IF TIME <> 0 THEN POKE 23355 ,INT (TIME/10): POKE 23354 ,TIME - 10 * PEEK 23355: POKE 23370 ,61
200 PRINT AT 0 ,5; "START GYROSCOPE TAPE"
210 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
1000 DATA 1 ,58 ,0 ,33 ,182
1001 DATA 92 ,205 ,232 ,25 ,42
1002 DATA 75 ,92 ,237 ,91 ,83
1003 DATA 92 ,237 ,82 ,68 ,77
1004 DATA 235 ,205 ,232 ,25 ,49
1005 DATA 255 ,93 ,221 ,33 ,0
1006 DATA 64 ,17 ,0 ,27 ,55
1007 DATA 62 ,255 ,205 ,86 ,5
1008 DATA 48 ,241 ,221 ,33 ,0
1009 DATA 94 ,17 ,0 ,162 ,55
1010 DATA 62 ,255 ,205 ,86 ,5
1011 DATA 48 ,241 ,33 ,0 ,6
1012 DATA 34 ,128 ,207 ,62 ,7
1013 DATA 50 ,230 ,207 ,62 ,53
1014 DATA 50 ,162 ,210 ,62 ,0
1015 DATA 50 ,10 ,231 ,50 ,28
1016 DATA 231 ,195 ,194 ,206
9999 STOP
```

PYRAMID

Still a good game now it is made that much easier by the addition of these pokes.

```
1 REM PYRAMID POKES: PRINT AT 0,7; "START PYRAMID TAPE"
2 MERGE ""
5 GO TO 10
282 INPUT "START ENERGY (0-999) "; LINE E$
```

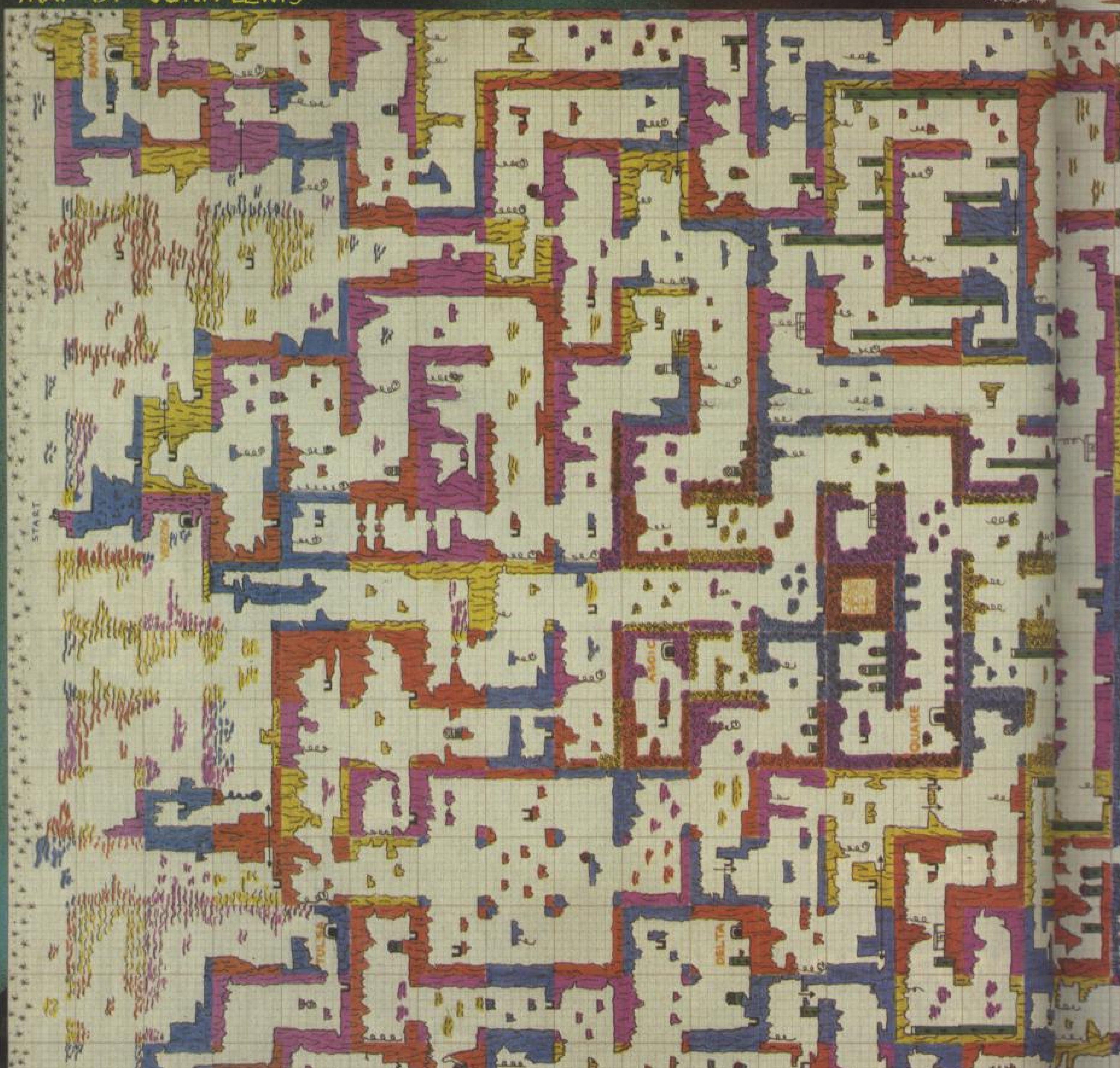
108


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SMASH TRAPS
SECRET PASSAGE
ELECTRONS
CRYSTALS
HIGH DENSITY CLOUD
KYZIA
EXIAL
ALGOL
ULTRA

```
284 IF LEN E$ = 0 OR LEN E$ > 3 THEN GO TO 282
285 FOR I = 1 TO LEN E$
286 IF E$ (I) >= "0" AND E$ (I) <= "9" THEN POKE 37310 - I * 3 ,VAL E$ (I)
288 NEXT I
```

CYLU

It was claimed by a bod at Firebird that it would be hard to crack the protection on this game. Despite that, here are the infinite lives pokes.

```
5 REM CYLU POKES
10 CLEAR 63999
20 LET TOT = 0
30 FOR I = 64000 TO 64234
40 READ A
50 LET TOT = TOT + A + A * PEEK (I-64000)
60 POKE I ,A
70 NEXT I
80 IF TOT <> 3318133 THEN PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN DATA!!!": BEEP 1 ,0: STOP
90 PRINT AT 0 ,8; "START CYLU TAPE"
100 RANDOMIZE USR 64000
1000 DATA 49 ,0 ,0 ,221 ,33
1001 DATA 0 ,0 ,17 ,17 ,0
1002 DATA 175 ,55 ,205 ,86 ,5
1003 DATA 17 ,232 ,3 ,62 ,255
1004 DATA 55 ,205 ,86 ,5 ,33
1005 DATA 86 ,5 ,17 ,0 ,255
1006 DATA 1 ,175 ,0 ,237 ,176
1007 DATA 221 ,33 ,61 ,250 ,38
1008 DATA 255 ,221 ,110 ,0 ,125
1009 DATA 60 ,40 ,10 ,221 ,126
1010 DATA 1 ,119 ,221 ,35 ,221
1011 DATA 35 ,24 ,239 ,195, 88
1012 DATA 250 ,80 ,132 ,113 ,134
1013 DATA 115 ,128 ,117 ,141 ,118
1014 DATA 255 ,121 ,153 ,124 ,29
1015 DATA 126 ,132 ,128 ,116 ,129
1016 DATA 255 ,142 ,145 ,143 ,255
1017 DATA 146 ,17 ,255 ,49 ,20
1018 DATA 255 ,175 ,50 ,0 ,255
1019 DATA 33 ,0 ,0 ,34 ,1
1020 DATA 255 ,62 ,195 ,50 ,145
1021 DATA 255 ,33 ,175 ,255 ,34
1022 DATA 146 ,255 ,33 ,157 ,250
1023 DATA 17 ,175 ,255 ,1 ,76
1024 DATA 0 ,237 ,176 ,221 ,33
1025 DATA 0 ,64 ,17 ,0 ,28
1026 DATA 62 ,255 ,55 ,20 ,8
1027 DATA 21 ,243 ,62 ,15, 211
1028 DATA 254, 33, 0, 91, 229
1029 DATA 219, 254, 31, 230, 32
1030 DATA 246, 2, 79, 191, 195
1031 DATA 21, 255, 221, 124, 60
1032 DATA 32, 6, 221, 33, 0
1033 DATA 0, 24, 2, 229, 225
1034 DATA 58, 0, 255, 60, 50
1035 DATA 0, 255, 254, 16, 32
1036 DATA 42, 175, 50, 0, 255
1037 DATA 229, 42, 1, 255, 35
1038 DATA 34, 1, 255, 213, 17
1039 DATA 30, 193, 237, 82, 209
1040 DATA 225, 32, 27, 33, 175
1041 DATA 50, 34, 61, 91, 33
1042 DATA 31, 148, 34, 63, 91
1043 DATA 253, 33, 22, 220, 243
1044 DATA 195, 0, 91, 62, 7
1045 DATA 61, 32, 253, 237, 95
1046 DATA 195, 150, 255, 0,
9999 STOP
```

FAIRLIGHT

This is the first of the big routines but I'm sure you will agree that it is worth all that time typing it in, I've checked it out and it works perfectly. When you start the Fairlight tape from the start a piece of code is not loaded and the counter on the loading screen is disabled, do not worry about this because it is meant to happen.

```
1 REM FAIRLIGHT POKES
5 CLS
10 CLEAR 65535
20 LET TOT = 0
30 RESTORE
40 FOR I = 56000 TO 56407
50 READ A: LET TOT =TOT + A + A *INT (I-56028)
60 POKE I, A
70 NEXT I
80 IF TOT <> 9401761 THEN PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN DATA!!!": BEEP 1,0: STOP
90 PRINT AT 0, 5; "START FAIRLIGHT TAPE"
100 PRINT AT 1, 1; "PLEASE WAIT, I HAVEN'T CRASHED"
110 RANDOMIZE USR 56328
1000 DATA 195, 223, 218, 0, 0
1001 DATA 14, 0, 201, 218, 133
1002 DATA 11, 171, 222, 24, 111
1003 DATA 160, 107, 24, 0, 0
1004 DATA 91, 0, 0, 178, 220
1005 DATA 160, 107, 0, 0, 0
1006 DATA 64, 243, 49, 195, 218
1007 DATA 221, 33, 224, 90, 33
1008 DATA 224, 87, 17, 224, 255
1009 DATA 6, 24, 14, 8, 229
1010 DATA 37, 13, 32, 251, 125
1011 DATA 214, 32, 111, 254, 224
1012 DATA 40, 4, 124, 198, 8
1013 DATA 103, 221, 229, 221, 25
1014 DATA 16, 231, 28, 62, 8
1015 DATA 211, 254, 38, 50, 6
1016 DATA 156, 62, 22, 205, 214
1017 DATA 219, 48, 245, 62, 198
1018 DATA 184, 48, 240, 37, 32
1019 DATA 239, 6, 201, 205, 218
1020 DATA 219, 48, 230, 120, 254
1021 DATA 212, 48, 244, 205, 218
1022 DATA 219, 48, 220, 62, 195
1023 DATA 50, 241, 219, 221, 33
1024 DATA 221, 218, 17, 2, 0
1025 DATA 237, 95, 6, 18, 46
1026 DATA 1, 120, 6, 215, 205
1027 DATA 214, 219, 208, 62, 228
1028 DATA 184, 203, 21, 62, 22
1029 DATA 210, 68, 219, 58, 220
1030 DATA 218, 133, 50, 220, 218
1031 DATA 101, 58, 53, 221, 170
1032 DATA 171, 221, 172, 221, 173
1033 DATA 173, 221, 119, 0, 6
1034 DATA 10, 203, 99, 40, 13
1035 DATA 58, 53, 221, 198, 138
1036 DATA 131, 146, 50, 53, 221
1037 DATA 5, 5, 5, 58, 53
1038 DATA 221, 198, 103, 50, 53
1039 DATA 221, 221, 35, 27, 122
1040 DATA 179, 194, 65, 219, 195
1041 DATA 143, 219, 42, 221, 218
1042 DATA 17, 246, 3, 237, 82
1043 DATA 194, 201, 220, 33, 170
1044 DATA 219, 34, 141, 219, 221
1045 DATA 225, 17, 32, 0, 6
1046 DATA 2, 195, 65, 219, 209
1047 DATA 122, 179, 202, 188, 219
1048 DATA 213, 221, 225, 19, 17
1049 DATA 32, 0, 6, 4, 195
1050 DATA 65, 219, 124, 33, 203
1051 DATA 219, 34, 141, 219, 103
1052 DATA 203, 124, 6, 1, 195
1053 DATA 205, 219, 6, 6, 209
1054 DATA 122, 179, 200, 221, 225
1055 DATA 195, 65, 219, 205, 234
1056 DATA 219, 208, 195, 221, 219
1057 DATA 123, 230, 7, 195, 227
1058 DATA 219, 62, 0, 195, 232
1059 DATA 219, 62, 19, 61, 32
1060 DATA 253, 167, 4, 32, 3
1061 DATA 201, 201, 220, 219, 254
1062 DATA 31, 200, 169, 230, 32
1063 DATA 40, 241, 121, 47, 79
1064 DATA 62, 0, 246, 8, 211
1065 DATA 254, 55, 201, 1, 58
1066 DATA 0, 33, 182, 92, 205
1067 DATA 232, 25, 221, 33, 0
1068 DATA 0, 17, 93, 5, 62
1069 DATA 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
1070 DATA 48, 241, 62, 55, 50
1071 DATA 53, 221, 33, 63, 220
1072 DATA 17, 178, 220, 1, 25
1073 DATA 0, 237, 176, 175, 211
1074 DATA 254, 33, 244, 1, 118
1075 DATA 43, 124, 181, 32, 250
1076 DATA 195, 223, 218, 33, 0
1077 DATA 0, 34, 173, 254, 34
1078 DATA 174, 254, 34, 234, 254
1079 DATA 34, 236, 254, 34, 237
1080 DATA 254, 34, 192, 241, 34
1081 DATA 193, 241, 201
1090 DATA 17, 0, 27, 205, 86
1100 DATA 5, 205, 122, 91, 62
1110 DATA 255, 55, 221, 33, 0
1120 DATA 96, 17, 0, 136, 205
1130 DATA 86, 5, 205, 122, 91
1140 DATA 62, 255, 55, 221, 33
1150 DATA 128, 91, 17, 43, 0
1160 DATA 205, 86, 5, 33, 92
1170 DATA 91, 34, 169, 91, 195
1180 DATA 128, 91, 33, 128, 91
1190 DATA 17, 58, 0, 205, 19
1200 DATA 0, 62, 233, 50, 176
1210 DATA 92, 38, 99, 46, 52
1220 DATA 243, 34, 120, 92, 62
1230 DATA 201, 50, 232, 205, 195
1240 DATA 0, 94, 175, 55, 221
1250 DATA 33, 0, 0, 17, 17
1260 DATA 0, 205, 86, 5, 201
9999 STOP
```

GYRON

The second biggy routine may take a while to key in but it does work! This program stops the towers from firing and it also provides a pause key. Press 0 to pause and 1 to resume play.

```
1 REM GYRON POKES
5 C8, 244, 205, 218
1022 DATA 219, 48, 220, 62, 195
1023 DATA 50, 241, 219, 221, 33
1024 DATA 221, 218, 17, 2, 0
1025 DATA 237, 95, 6, 18, 46
1026 DATA 1, 120, 6, 215, 205
1027 DATA 214, 219, 208, 62, 228
1028 DATA 184, 203, 21, 62, 22
1029 DATA 210, 68, 219, 58, 220
1030 DATA 218, 133, 50, 220, 218
1031 DATA 101, 58, 53, 221, 170
1032 DATA 171, 221, 172, 221, 173
1033 DATA 173, 221, 119, 0, 6
1034 DATA 10, 203, 99, 40, 13
1035 DATA 58, 53, 221, 198, 138
1036 DATA 131, 146, 50, 53, 221
1037 DATA 5, 5, 5, 58, 53
1038 DATA 221, 198, 103, 50, 53
1039 DATA 221, 221, 35, 27, 122
1040 DATA 179, 194, 65, 219, 195
1041 DATA 143, 219, 42, 221, 218
1042 DATA 17, 246, 3, 237, 82
1043 DATA 194, 201, 220, 33, 170
1044 DATA 219, 34, 141, 219, 221
1045 DATA 225, 17, 32, 0, 6
1046 DATA 2, 195, 65, 219, 209
1047 DATA 122, 179, 202, 188, 219
1048 DATA 213, 221, 225, 19, 17
1049 DATA 32, 0, 6, 4, 195
1050 DATA 65, 219, 124, 33, 203
1051 DATA 219, 34, 141, 219, 103
1052 DATA 203, 124, 6, 1, 195
1053 DATA 205, 219, 6, 6, 209
1054 DATA 122, 179, 200, 221, 225
1055 DATA 195, 65, 219, 205, 234
1056 DATA 219, 208, 195, 221, 219
1057 DATA 123, 230, 7, 195, 227
1058 DATA 219, 62, 0, 195, 232
1059 DATA 219, 62, 19, 61, 32
1060 DATA 253, 167, 4, 32, 3
1061 DATA 201, 201, 220, 219, 254
1062 DATA 31, 200, 169, 230, 32
1063 DATA 40, 241, 121, 47, 79
1064 DATA 62, 0, 246, 8, 211
1065 DATA 254, 55, 201, 1, 58
1066 DATA 0, 33, 182, 92, 205
1067 DATA 232, 25, 221, 33, 0
1068 DATA 0, 17, 93, 5, 62
1069 DATA 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
1070 DATA 48, 241, 62, 55, 50
1071 DATA 53, 221, 33, 63, 220
1072 DATA 17, 178, 220, 1, 25
1073 DATA 0, 237, 176, 175, 211
1074 DATA 254, 33, 244, 1, 118
1075 DATA 43, 124, 181, 32, 250
1076 DATA 195, 223, 218, 33, 0
1077 DATA 0, 34, 173, 254, 34
1078 DATA 174, 254, 34, 234, 254
1079 DATA 34, 236, 254, 34, 237
1080 DATA 254, 34, 192, 241, 34
1081 DATA 193, 241, 201
1090 DATA 17, 0, 27, 205, 86
1100 DATA 5, 205, 122, 91, 62
1110 DATA 255, 55, 221, 33, 0
1120 DATA 96, 17, 0, 136, 205
1130 DATA 86, 5, 205, 122, 91
1140 DATA 62, 255, 55, 221, 33
1150 DATA 128, 91, 17, 43, 0
1160 DATA 205, 86, 5, 33, 92
1170 DATA 91, 34, 169, 91, 195
1180 DATA 128, 91, 33, 128, 91
1190 DATA 17, 58, 0, 205, 19
1200 DATA 0, 62, 233, 50, 176
1210 DATA 92, 38, 99, 46, 52
1220 DATA 243, 34, 120, 92, 62
1230 DATA 201, 50, 232, 205, 195
1240 DATA 0, 94, 175, 55, 221
1250 DATA 33, 0, 0, 17, 17
1260 DATA 0, 205, 86, 5, 201
9999 STOP
```

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PLAYING TIPS

FIGHTING WARRIOR

When you defeat an enemy this routine restores all your energy so you stand a good chance of completing it. Save the routine to tape for future use.

```
1 REM FIGHTING WARRIOR
5 CLEAR 65535
10 LET TOT = 0
20 FOR I = 23296 TO 23401
30 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A
+ A PEEK (I-23296)
40 POKE I ,A
50 NEXT I
60 IF TOT <> 1300323 THEN
PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!!!":
BEEP 1 ,0: STOP
70 INK 0: PAPER 0: POKE 23624
,56: CLS
80 PRINT AT 0 ,1: "START
WARRIOR TAPE"
90 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
1000 DATA 221 ,33 ,0 ,0 ,17
1001 DATA 17 ,0 ,175 ,55 ,205
1002 DATA 86 ,5 ,62 ,255 ,17
1003 DATA 200 ,0 ,55 ,205 ,86
1004 DATA 5 ,17 ,17 ,0 ,175
1005 DATA 55 ,205 ,86 ,5 ,17
1006 DATA 200 ,0 ,62 ,255 ,55
1007 DATA 205 ,86 ,5 ,221 ,33
1008 DATA 0 ,128 ,17 ,250 ,0
1009 DATA 62 ,130 ,55 ,205 ,86
1010 DATA 5 ,62 ,195 ,50 ,217
1011 DATA 128 ,33 ,65 ,91 ,34
1012 DATA 218 ,128 ,195 ,0 ,128
1013 DATA 229 ,33 ,62 ,16 ,34
1014 DATA 37 ,64 ,33 ,0 ,50
1015 DATA 34 ,39 ,64 ,33 ,28
1016 DATA 239 ,34 ,41 ,64 ,33
1017 DATA 0 ,195 ,34 ,43 ,64
1018 DATA 33 ,197 ,235 ,34 ,45
1019 DATA 64 ,225 ,62 ,11 ,61
1020 DATA 32 ,253 ,0 ,195 ,222
1021 DATA 128
```

KNIGHT LORE

Many of you had trouble with the routines printed in issue 14 for this game so here is a revised version which you shouldn't have problems with.

```
5 REM KNIGHT LORE POKES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 RESTORE
30 LET TOT = 0
40 FOR I = 65024 TO 65178
50 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A
+ A * PEEK (I-65024)
60 POKE I ,A
70 NEXT I
80 IF TOT <> 2713224 THEN
PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN
DATA!!!": BEEP 1 ,0: STOP
100 PRINT "CHANGE INTO
WOLF (Y/N) ?";: GO SUB 500:
PRINT K$: IF K$ = "N" THEN
PRINT "YOU ALSO GET INFIN-
ITE TIME!!!": GO TO 130
110 POKE 65107 ,58: POKE
65110 ,58: POKE 65113 ,58
120 PRINT "INFINITE TIME (Y/N)
?";: GO SUB 500: PRINT K$: IF
K$ = "N" THEN POKE 65099 ,58
130 PRINT "CAN YOU BE
KILLED (Y/N) ?";: GO SUB 500:
PRINT K$: IF K$ = "Y" THEN
POKE 65103 ,58
200 PRINT $1;AT 0 ,5; "START
KNIGHTLORE TAPE"
210 RANDOMIZE USR 65024
500 IF INKEY$ <> "" THEN GO
TO 500
510 POKE 23658 ,8: LET K$ =
INKEY$: IF K$ <> "Y" AND K$
<> "N" THEN GO TO 510
520 RETURN
1000 DATA 33 ,0 ,92 ,17 ,1
1001 DATA 92 ,1 ,0 ,162 ,117
1002 DATA 237 ,176 ,221 ,33 ,0
1003 DATA 0 ,17 ,13 ,4 ,62
1004 DATA 255 ,55 ,205 ,86 ,5
1005 DATA 48 ,229 ,6 ,200 ,118
1006 DATA 16 ,253 ,205 ,103 ,254
1007 DATA 251 ,6 ,100 ,118 ,16
1008 DATA 253 ,49 ,255 ,255 ,33
1009 DATA 0 ,64 ,17 ,0 ,27
1010 DATA 205 ,103 ,254 ,205
,129
1011 DATA 254 ,33 ,0 ,97 ,17
1012 DATA 0 ,125 ,251 ,6 ,100
1013 DATA 118 ,16 ,253 ,205 ,103
1014 DATA 254 ,205 ,129 ,254
,175
1015 DATA 50 ,30 ,196 ,175 ,50
1016 DATA 63 ,209 ,175 ,50 ,161
1017 DATA 195 ,50 ,162 ,195 ,50
1018 DATA 163 ,195 ,195 ,0 ,97
1019 DATA 6 ,0 ,167 ,205 ,237
1020 DATA 5 ,208 ,201 ,6 ,25
1021 DATA 118 ,16 ,253 ,243 ,205
1022 DATA 95 ,254 ,120 ,254 ,40
1023 DATA 56 ,248 ,1 ,188 ,2
1024 DATA 11 ,120 ,177 ,32 ,251
1025 DATA 205 ,95 ,254 ,201 ,54
1026 DATA 1 ,205 ,95 ,254 ,205
1027 DATA 95 ,254 ,208 ,120 ,254
1028 DATA 13 ,203 ,22 ,48 ,242
1029 DATA 126 ,47 ,119 ,35 ,27
1030 DATA 122 ,179 ,32 ,231 ,201
9999 STOP
```

HALLS OF THE THINGS

Another set of pokes for this game but they do some additional things.

```
5 REM HALLS POKES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 RESTORE : LET TOT = 0
30 FOR I = 64000 TO 64074
40 READ A: LET TOT = TOT +A
+ A * PEEK (I-64000)
50 POKE I, A
60 NEXT I
70 IF TOT <> 1065524 THEN
PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN
DATA!!!": BEEP 1, 0: STOP
80 POKE 23658, 0
100 PRINT "CAN YOU BE
WOUNDED (Y/N) ?";: GO SUB
500: PRINT K$: IF K$ = "N"
THEN POKE 64068, 0
110 PRINT "UNLIMITED MAGIC
(Y/N) ?";: GO SUB 500: PRINT
K$: IF K$ = "Y" THEN POKE
64053, 0: POKE 64058, 0: POKE
64063, 0
120 PRINT "UNLIMITED
ARROWS (Y/N) ?";: GO SUB
500: PRINT K$: IF K$ = "Y"
THEN POKE 64048, 0
200 PRINT AT 0, 1; "START
HALLS OF THE THINGS TAPE"
210 RANDOMIZE USR 64000
500 IF INKEY$ <> "" THEN GO
TO 500
510 LET K$ = INKEY$: IF K$ <>
"Y" AND K$ <> "N" THEN GO
TO 510
520 RETURN
1000 DATA 49, 0, 0, 1, 58
1001 DATA 0, 33, 182, 92, 205
1002 DATA 232, 25, 221, 33, 61
1003 DATA 92, 17, 195, 12, 62
1004 DATA 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
1005 DATA 48, 241, 33, 64, 96
1006 DATA 17, 0, 192, 1, 46
1007 DATA 33, 237, 176, 33, 47
1008 DATA 250, 34, 216, 192, 195
1009 DATA 0, 192, 62, 61, 50
1010 DATA 221, 126, 62, 2, 50
1011 DATA 3, 130, 62, 1, 50
1012 DATA 100, 131, 62, 30, 50
1013 DATA 126, 140, 62, 128, 50
1014 DATA 205, 127, 195, 0, 96
9999 STOP
```

DYNAMITE DAN

Next month will see some infinite lives pokes for this game but these should keep you going for the moment!

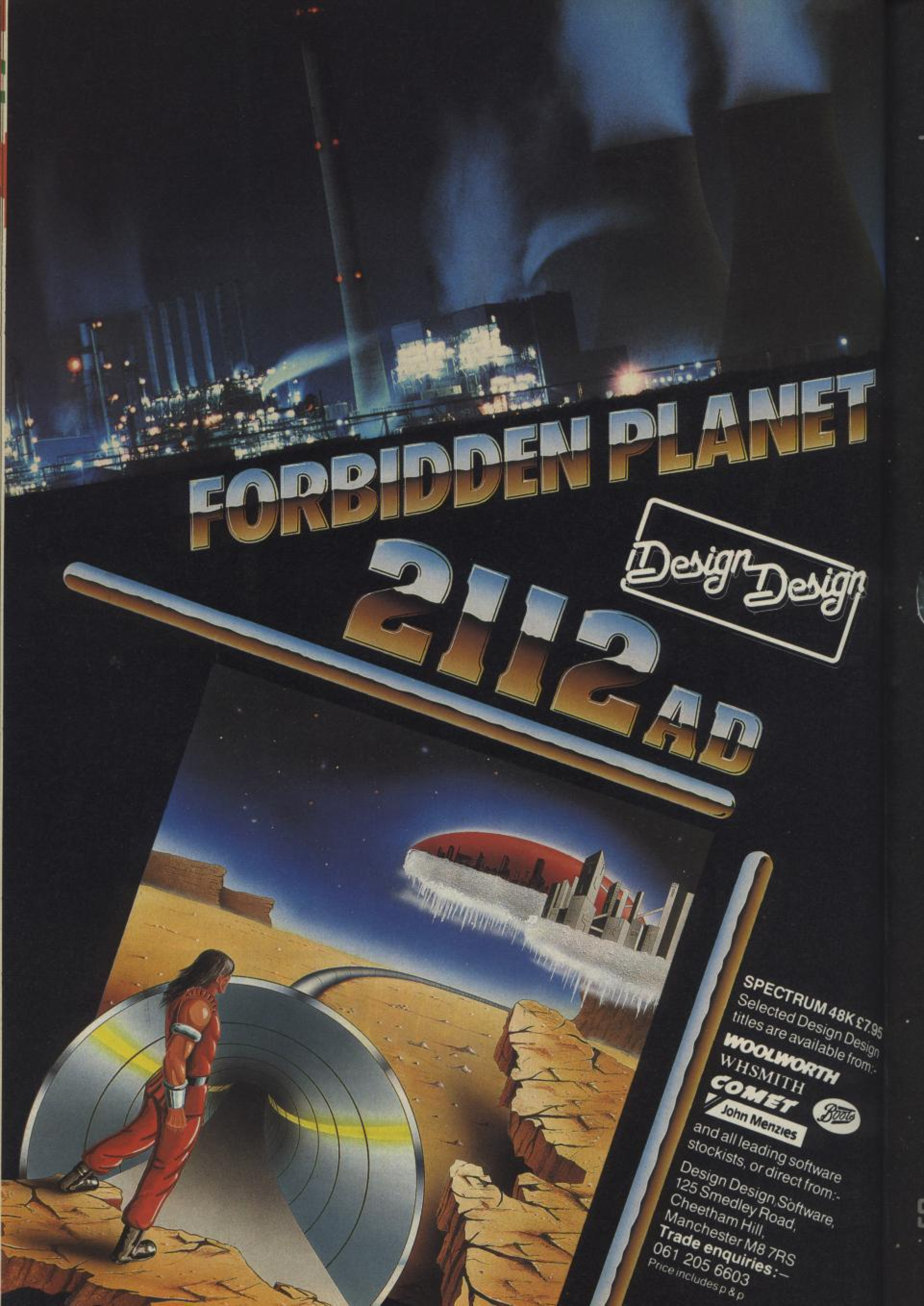
```
5 REM DYNAMITE POKES
10 CLEAR 63999
20 LET TOT = 0
30 FOR I = 64000 TO 64164
40 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A
+ A * PEEK (I-64000)
50 POKE I ,A
60 NEXT I
70 IF TOT <> 2611775 THEN
PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN
DATA!!!": BEEP 1 ,0: STOP
80 POKE 23658 ,8
100 PRINT "DO YOU WANT
CREATURES (Y/N)?";: GO SUB
500: PRINT A$
110 IF A$ = "N" THEN POKE
64151 ,50
120 PRINT "TELEPORTS(Y/N)
?";: GO SUB 500: PRINT A$
130 IF A$ = "N" THEN POKE
64154 ,50
140 PRINT "KILLER RAYS
(Y/N)?";: GO SUB 500: PRINT
A$
150 IF A$ = "N" THEN POKE
64157 ,50
160 PRINT AT 21 ,0; "ARE
THESE OPTIONS OK (Y/N)?":
GO SUB 500
165 CLS
170 IF A$ = "N" THEN POKE
64151 ,33: POKE 64154 ,33:
POKE 64157 ,33: GO TO 100
180 PRINT AT 0 ,0;" START
DYNAMITE DAN TAPE"
190 RANDOMIZE USR 64000
500 IF INKEY$ <> "" THEN GO
TO 500
510 LET A$ = INKEY$
520 IF A$ <> "Y" AND A$ <>
"N" THEN GO TO 510
525 BEEP .25 ,40
530 RETURN
1000 DATA 49 ,132 ,253 ,221 ,33
1001 DATA 0 ,0 ,17 ,17 ,0
1002 DATA 175 ,55 ,205 ,86 ,5
1003 DATA 17 ,232 ,3 ,62 ,255
1004 DATA 55 ,205 ,86 ,5 ,221
1005 DATA 33 ,34 ,254 ,17 ,144
1006 DATA 1 ,62 ,7 ,55 ,205
1007 DATA 86 ,5 ,1 ,254 ,1
1008 DATA 33 ,34 ,254 ,126 ,237
1009 DATA 103 ,126 ,238 ,165
,119
1010 DATA 35 ,11 ,120 ,177 ,32
1011 DATA 243 ,243 ,33 ,71 ,250
1012 DATA 17 ,163 ,255 ,1 ,92
1013 DATA 0 ,237 ,176 ,195 ,163
1014 DATA 255 ,62 ,132 ,17 ,0
1015 DATA 24 ,221 ,33 ,0 ,64
1016 DATA 205 ,171 ,254 ,17 ,0
1017 DATA 4 ,221 ,33 ,255 ,91
1018 DATA 205 ,42 ,255 ,17 ,225
1019 DATA 1 ,221 ,33 ,0 ,0
1020 DATA 205 ,250 ,254 ,17 ,29
1021 DATA 159 ,221 ,33 ,28 ,250
1022 DATA 205 ,42 ,255 ,33 ,192
1023 DATA 93 ,1 ,48 ,117 ,126
1024 DATA 237 ,103 ,126 ,238
,230
1025 DATA 119 ,35 ,11 ,120 ,177
1026 DATA 32 ,243 ,33 ,28 ,250
1027 DATA 17 ,28 ,255 ,1 ,29
1028 DATA 159 ,237 ,184 ,33 ,16
1029 DATA 167 ,34 ,54 ,92 ,62
1030 DATA 201 ,33 ,146 ,229 ,33
1031 DATA 92 ,230 ,33 ,213 ,230
1032 DATA 195 ,0 ,200 ,0 ,0
9999 STOP
```

CREDITS

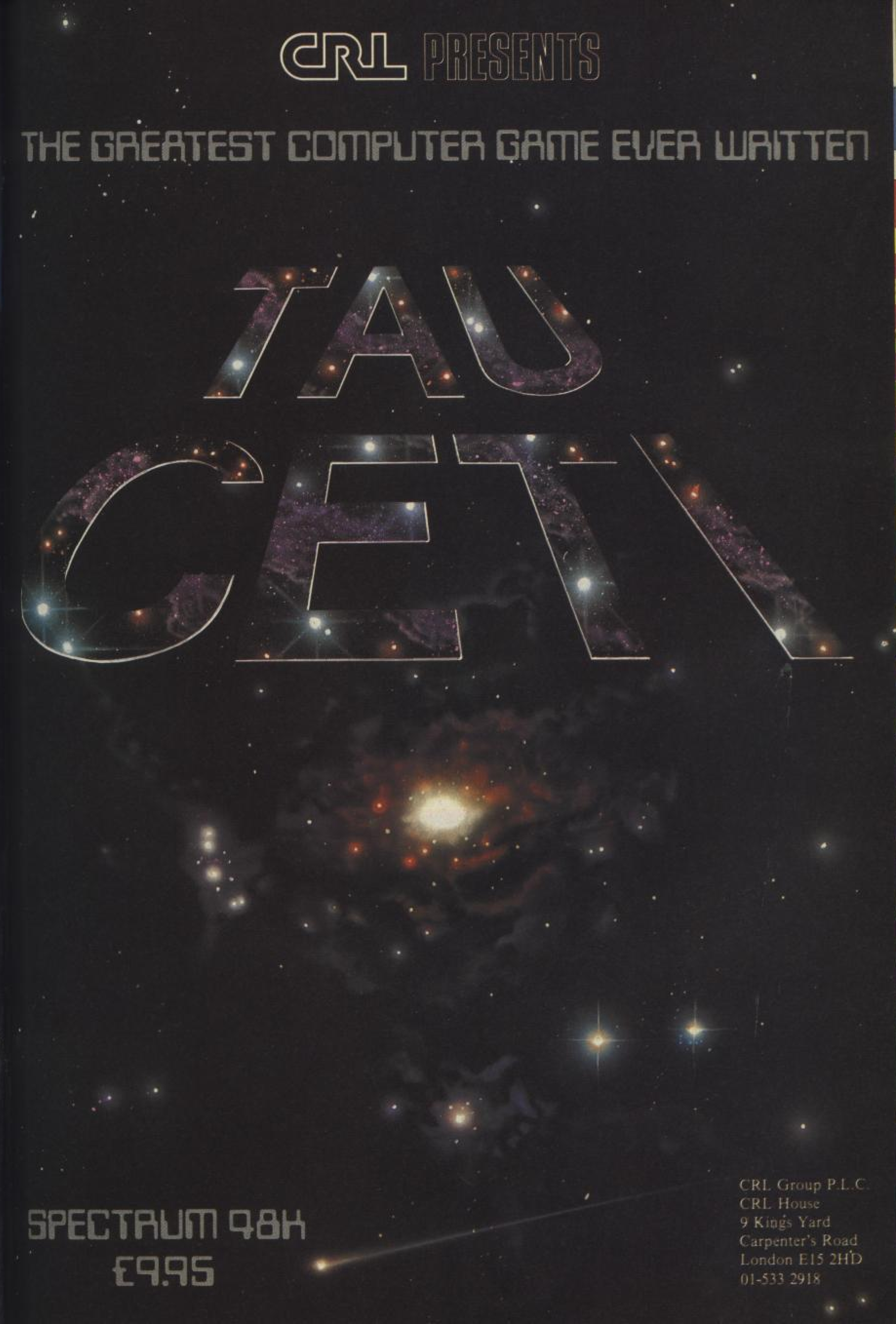
PAUL STEPHENSON: Halls of the Things. HOWARD GRIST of Sheffield: Wheelie, Full Throttle, Avalon, WTHAS and Cavern Fighter. ROGER NUTTER of Brigg: JSW II. Keith Walker of Birmingham: Monty on the Run, Spyhunter, Nightshade and Tapper. Phil Churchyard of Grantham: Fairlight, Gyron, Gyroscope, Fighting Warrior, Dynamite Dan, Pyramid, Halls of the Things, Nightshade, Knightlore and Cylu. Piers Pettman of Amersham: Ad Astra

Ok then that is enough pokes for the Christmas issue. If you have got any pokes please send them in because I may ,have another Pokes Special before the next Christmas Issue!


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HOTLINE TOP 30

1 (*1)* **WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** Melbourne House
2 (*2)* **HYPERSPORTS** Imagine
3 (*6)* **FAIRLIGHT** The Edge
4 (*9)* **SPY VS SPY** US Gold
5 *(11)* **HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER** Vortex
6 (*7)* **NIGHTSHADE** Ultimate
7 *(14)* **SPY HUNTER** US Gold
8 *(—)* **STARQUAKE** Bubble Bus
9 (*8)* **MATCHDAY** Ocean
10 (*3)* **NODES OF YESOD** Odin

Melbourne House retains the top slot this month with *Way of the Exploding Fist*, with a couple of big jumps and falls livening up the charts. **Vortex** will no doubt be pleased about the leap *Highway Encounter* makes, as will **Microsphere** about *Skool Daze* — perhaps new interest following the release of *Back to Skool*, and *Spy Hunter*'s still around! A total of nine new entries (or re-entries) this month, with the biggest fall being taken by **Ocean**'s *Daley Thompson's Decathalon*.

11 (*4)* **FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING** Elite
12 *(10)* **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
13 *(16)* **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
14 *(12)* **DYNAMITE DAN** Mirrorsoft
15 *(15)* **FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD** Ocean
16 *(13)* **ALIEN 8** Ultimate
17 *(23)* **MARSPORT** Gargoyle Games
18 *(—)* **DT'S SUPERTEST** Ocean
19 *(—)* **FIGHTING WARRIOR** Melbourne House
20 *(21)* **KNIGHTLORE** Ultimate

21 *(—)* **WORLD SERIE S BASEBALL** Imagine
22 *(—)* **TAPPER** US Gold
23 *(—)* **STARION** Melbourne House
24 *(—)* **SCHOOL DAZE** Microsphere
25 *(—)* **MATCH POINT** Psion
26 (*5)* **DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHALON** Ocean
27 *(26)* **BRUCE LEE** US Gold
28 *(19)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
29 *(—)* **ARNHEM** CCS
30 *(—)* **WIZARD'S LAIR**Bubble Bus



HOTLINE CHART WINNERS
Top dog this month is **Graham Morris** of Cranleigh, with **D Ballard-Adams** of Millom, Cumbria, **Mark Griffin** from Galway, Ireland, **Des O'Connor** (not THE Des . . . ?) of Wembley and **Mrs Middleton** from Sheffield running up, so to speak.

ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART



Perhaps not too much of a surprise to see **Gargoyle**'s *Marsport* hit the top this month — but otherwise the Adventure Chart seems to be shuffling a very familiar group of games around, each moving a couple of positions up or down. No new entries this month, but four worthy re-entries. Oh, and before finishing this little blurb, mention ought to be made of the little slip we made last month. *Valkyrie 17* is distributed by **Palace**, as we said, but was written by the *Ram Jam Corporation*, as we didn't. Sorry chaps!

1 *(4)* **MARSPORT** Gargoyle Games
2 *(2)* **RED MOON** Level 9
3 *(3)* **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
4 *(1)* **FOURTH PROTOCOL** Hutchinson
5 *(5)* **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
6 *(6)* **KENTILLA** Micromega
7 *(7)* **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9
8 *(9)* **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
9 *(—)* **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** Mizar
10 *(10)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Level 9
11 *(11)* **WITCHES CAULDRON** Mikro-Gen
12 *(14)* **RETURN TO EDEN** Level 9
13 *(15)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
14 *(19)* **HAMPSTEAD** Melbourne House
15 *(—)* **SPIDERMAN** Adventure International
16 *(16)* **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
17 *(17)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games
18 *(—)* **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9
19 *(18)* **URBAN UPSTART** Richard Shepherd
20 *(29)* **VALKYRIE 17** The Ram Jam Corporation
21 *(20)* **GREMLINS** Adventure International
22 *(21)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
23 *(26)* **EMERALD ISLE** Level 9
24 *(22)* **AVALON** Hewson Consultants
25 *(23)* **EUREKA** Domark
26 *(24)* **SNOWBALL** Level 9
27 *(—)* **ESPIONAGE ISLAND** Artic
28 *(25)* **VALHALLA** Legend
29 *(28)* **ORACLE'S CAVE** Dorcas
30 *(27)* **THE HULK** Adventure International

ADVENTURE CHART WINNERS
Hurrah for **M Manney**, who comes out of the Adventure Chart Chest this month. Lots of goodies coming your way soon. **Mark Smith** from Chorley, Lancs, **Karl Alldred** of Cadishead, Manchester, **A Melvin** from Burwell and **Nicholas Abarno** who hails from Croxley Green in Rickmansworth





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It hardly seems a year ago that I made my debut Playing Tips (I had been writing odds and ends for a couple of months before) but there again it just goes to show that Lloyd Mangram's saying is true.

'Time flies when you're being overworked and underpaid.'

Those of you who have been paying close attention to the Playing Tips column will have noticed that since last January I have risen through the ranks and am now head of the Playing Tips Dept for CRASH with my own desk and personalised chair (it's got a sticker underneath saying that it's mine). Of course I have to fight running battles to keep them both, for being at Skool during the day means that my property is under continual attack. So far this year the following has gone missing:

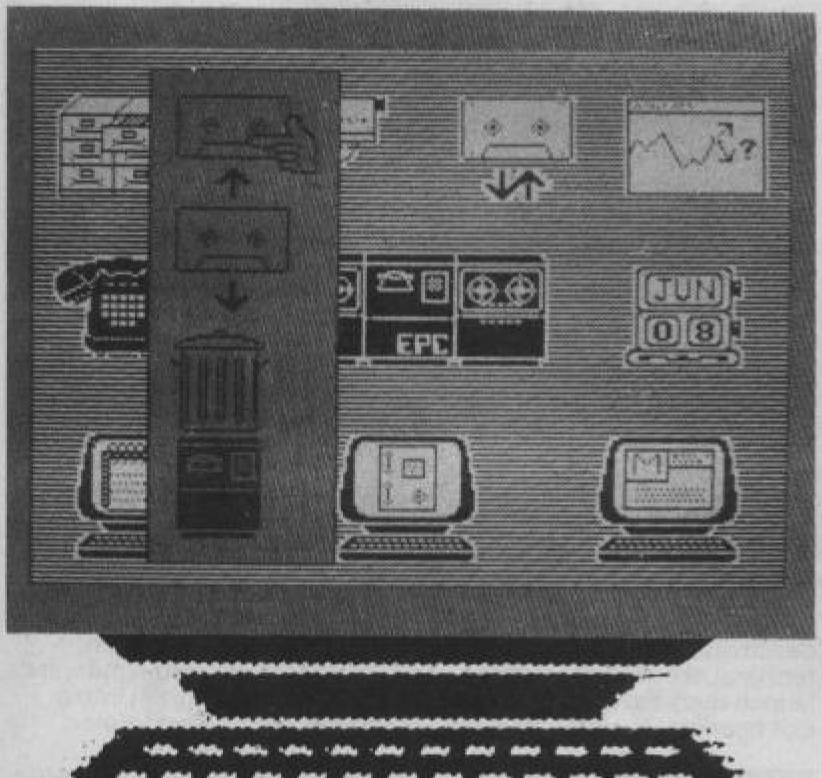
2 Packets of Worcester Sauce French Fries
2 Struts that hold up my In and Out trays, now the contents of both are mixed up
½ a Yorkie Bar nicked while I was cleaning the windows, later I found out that Jeremy (On diet so must eat) Spencer had consumed it.
1 Packet of Acid French Fries
¼ of a can of Coke previously spiked with Washing up liquid
10 Biros (I nicked these from someone else's desk in the first place).
Another couple of packets of Asbestos French Fries
1 Packet of Mixed Nuts and Raisins which still had the Brazil nuts in.
Music Tapes
1 Stereo (hard to conceal so I found it sometime later in the clutches of a sleeping Liddon)
And yet more packets of Entrail dissolving French Fries.

Luckily my desk hasn't been under that much threat but if Rignall's ego grows anymore (is that possible) then it will surely need something to sit on!

This year has been an excellent one for tips and games. The standard of software released now surpasses that which appeared this time last year. Games that have caught my eye this year are *The Fourth Protocol*, *Marsport*, *Dragontorc*, *Shadowfire*, *Robin of the Wood*, *Astroclone*, *Elite*, and *Fairlight*. Also listed below is my all time top 10 on the Spectrum:

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT ● MARSPORT ● DOOMDARK'S REVENGE ● ELITE ● DEATH CHASE ● DRAGONTORC ● STARSTRIKE ● TIR NA NOG ● ROBIN OF THE WOOD ● KNIGHT LORE

Even by todays's standards many of these are still excellent games which I would recommend to anyone. Most of them have been featured heavily in the tips section but I still want information on the Special Mission in *Elite*.



THE FOURTH PROTOCOL

Since I first published some tips for this game a few month back I have been deluged with pleas for help. Luckily Steven Stewart **of Knightswood has sent in some help which should get you through the remainder of the first part of the game aand some of the second. If anyone has got any more tips they would be greatly appreciated.**

The aanswers to Plumbs questions are:
(1) Faulkner
(2) Swedish
(3) Stenberij
(4) Nilson
(5) Fingerprints
(6) Gaza Strip
(7) False Flag

If you type these in you will get the password ASPEN. This word is used for the FIRST lift, ie the one in Gordon St.

In the second part, examine the coat to find the key for the drawer. This gives you the tube map and the wallet. After taking the computer, you must go to the filing cabinet and type in 'Preston'. This gives you an I.D. card. Now go to the second floor to receive a message from B Harcourt-Smith. Do not take the documents or the folder out of Gordon St. or you will be arrested. To get into Sentinel House you need your I.D. card so don't drop it.

In Sentinel House, you can drop most things in your office but not the I.D. remember. You will receive a piece of paper from Penfold which tells you a poem. It reads

'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure . . . .'

If you type "Code" into the computer it tells you this:

'See glossary, so let X equal 3'

This means you must do this to the poem:

In Xanadu did Kublai Khan a stately pleasure
12 3456789 111 111111 1222 2 2222223 33333333
012 345678 9012 3 4567890 12345678

You then look up the letters in ASPEN to get an eight-figured Number. Note you must first use the first letter in the poem, ie take the A in ASPEN to be 4 . . . .

This lets you get into the lift. On the first floor you must examine the teleprinter, then run a search on BREMERHAVEN (do not worry when nothing happens). Then go and check the other printer. If you don't do this in the order shown then you won't find anything. What you do find is TWO telephone numbers for two ships. Mistral - 02726514 and Auslander - 0255502. You only need to phone the Mistral number because the Auslander does not leave its dock, but you must phone Mistral because when you go to Bristol (Bristol being the docking place of the ship) you must go to Bus platform One and wait for a bus. This takes you to the docks where, after finding the ship, you get a piece of paper from the captain of the ship. Next you must take the briefcase to Crick in the hobbyists shop at Boston Manor, you should now have about 33%

ATIC ATAC

If you're the proud owner of this game and STILL have not completed it then dig it out, load it up and follow these directions as sent in by Thomas Irvine **of Alpington but they only work on your first go.**

Down left, pick up green key left, left, left, left.up, up, up, up, right, right, fall to Golden Key room and pick up Golden Key. Down right, down right, right, right, beware of the devil. Down, down, right. Through bookcase up, through bookcase, pick up letter G of the key. Through bookcase, down, through bookcase down, through bookcase left, up, up, left, left, left, down, left up, up, right, down, left, down, left, left, down left. Pick up AC of key. Right up, right, right, up, up, up. Right, down, left, left, down, down. Pick up handle of key. Up, up, right, right, up right and you've finished the game.



ASTROCLONE

Continuing the saga of the Astroclones' quest against the Seiddab, Steve Turner **takes up the story.**

FRONTIOS AND SPECTROS

Two more bases were isolated. Frontios Galactic Outpost had proved to be virtually defenceless. A locked door was a problem until it was short circuited with a computer. This was charged up by smashing a terminal with a hammer. An Astro Clone found death in some alien caves hidden behind a door. There, two thousand years ago, the Sei had first encounterd the malevolent snake like-Kri; ending their civilisation. In the narrow tunnels Kri pods erupted. The young Kri were deadly if touched but as yet unable to send the deadly mind-bolts that the adults used as their means of attack.

The Clone squeezed past. After a deadly encounter with many snappers a wire was found. This was used to fish a transmit card from an old burrow. The wire also proved useful in shorting out the last terminal, shutting the base down. Strange signs were found in two of the rooms.

On Spectros the Move maintenance droids were quickly despatched with few losses. A destruct device when held in the hand proved able to demolish any droid in the base, this was used to great effect and the Astroclones proceeded with minimal difficulty. A detector was used to find three craftily hidden artifacts, an Isocase, its sonic key and a pass. The Isocase contained the Acron Device, the only weapon able to destroy the Kri which up until now had wrought many casualties on the invading party. The pass opened two doors. Behind one a very small unmoveable object was heavily guarded by a terminal issuing bolts of pure energy. Many roomms were guarded by the ultimate class of droids the Battle Cyborg, floating on their antigrav pads they were a deadly opponent causing many losses. In two rooms energy balls blossomed out of nowhere. Their invisible creation devices when shot with laser revealed two more securipasses. Behind the locked doors code cards and a wire were found. The cards deactivated the strange defence terminal, the wire shorted the launch terminal revealing the exit beamer.

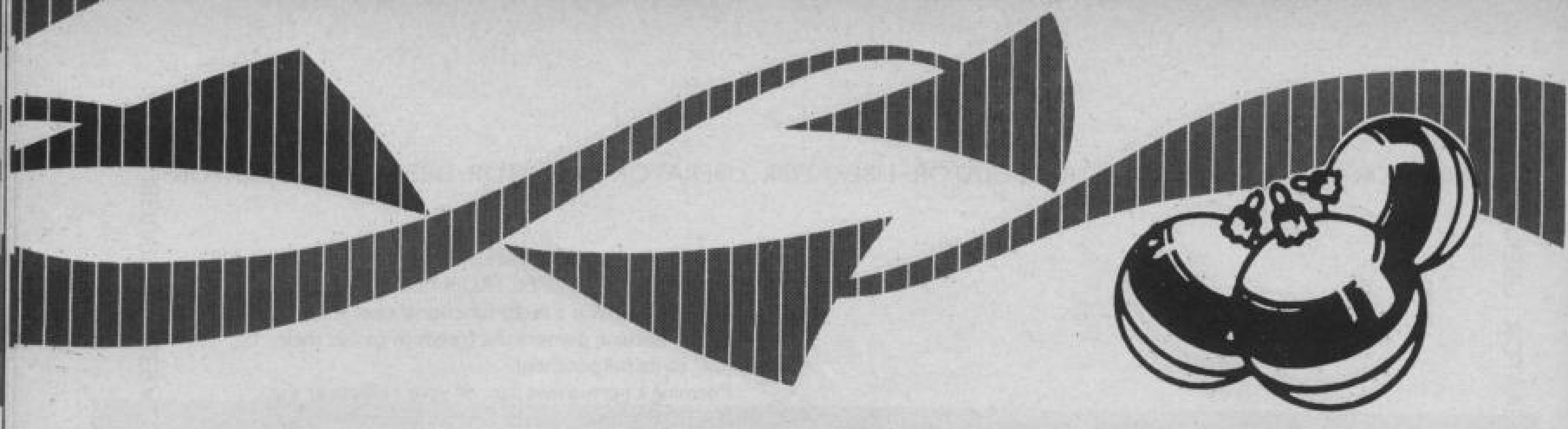
SYNCRON HQ

At last the Sei headquarters had been found; it was here that the six messages were hidden by the last of the Sei in their last desperate attempt to fight off the Kri.

Syncron HQ was defended by spherical sentinel droids. Luckily for the Clone force these were an earlier class without the dreaded phased beam weaponary of later Cyborg models. Still, resistance was tough but eventually the droids succumbed to the powerful Clone laser fire. Locked doors were encountered but a small utility robot when powered with a battery proved able to control these and all the beamers on the base. The control room was cleared of droids — not an easy task but one that resulted in few losses on the Clones' part. One owned a sonic key, opening an Isocase containing a cassette with a C64 program captured twenty years before from an Earth computer museum. Wondering what a Llama was he inserted the program into a drive. The launch compter promptly freaked out.

The HQ pass gave access to a beam room which the robot activated. The Clone beamed down to a crystal mine guarded by deadly laser beaming mine droids. Many clones were lost before the mine was cleared but the effort was worth it. Two messages were found down tunnels, another two using an autograb to fish behind a rock and in a hole. A message on the ceiling had to be shot down. The final message had to be blasted out of a heap of rock. Explosives were placed and the detonator pushed. A code card 'Alpha' was also revealed. The six messages were carefully pieced together — here was all the information the Clones needed to complete the mission! But first Termina had to be taken ...

LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR · LIBERATOR



MARSPORT

Last month I did publish some tips for this excellent game but you may not have seen them because they were tagged on the end of the *Shadow of the Unicorn* tips. So here they are again with a few extra tips to help you complete phase one. Thanks to Paul Fisher **of Kingsthorpe and a cast of thousands for this information.**

1. First go to to Elis Section G and get gun permit. Now proceed to Daly Section D and put gun permit in key locker, take gun go to charge locker and deposit the gun in it. This charges the gun and you are now ready for the enemy but remember you can only shoot the warriors with this gun not the Warlords!.
2. Go to Daly Section C and get the flour then to Section A and get baking tin and to Section D to get water. Put these in a factor unit to make a cake. Put the cake in the key locker and the bakery is now open.
3. Now go to Daly Section G and get the charcoal. Once you have done this then go to Joly Section H and get the gauze. Take a chute to laxa level Section C and put these in factor unit. This will make a gas mask. Go in the danger door here and when bomb has exploded put gas mask in locker for future use.
4. Go to laxa Section G to the Map room, take Earth map to Section A (via the Gas Bomb). Go into the icecream room and get the ice pack. Go to Gill Level Section E, put the Earth map in the key locker, this opens the soil depot.
5. Take ice pack to Gill Level Section C and put it in the key locker. This opens the hot house door. Get the geranium from inside.
6. Go to Joly Level Section H and put the geranium in the key locker to open the plant room door.
7. Go to laxa Level Section H and get the glass then go to Section G and enter the map room, get the sun chart and go to Section E and get the frame, take these to Alba Level Section B and put them in a factor unit. This will make you some eye shields. Now go in astromomy door, it is safe to enter here as long as you have the eyeshields. When the Nova bomb has detonated put the eyeshields in the locker for future use.
8. Go to Daly Section F and enter the bakery, get the dough and go to laxa Section A and get the cornet from the ice cream room. Go to Farr Level Section A and put the cornet in the music rooms key locker. This is now open. Get the lute from inside.
9. Go to Byer Section 1 and in to the oratory door, get the dais, go to Section E and put the dough in the key locker. This opens the banker door. Go through to Section A and put the dais and lute in factor unit. These will make the lead suit. Now go in danger door and once radiation bomb has gone off put it in locker for future use. Go through to Section C.
10. Go down to Joly level Section C via the South facing lift. Go in safety door and get the ear muffs and the boots. Go back up lift to Byer level Section C. Then go to Section A into the danger door. Put the bomb in the key locker and this will open the door to Section B. Go through to danger door in this section (Northern one). Go in when sonic bomb has gone off. Put the ear muffs in the locker.
11. Go to Daly Section C and put boots in the key locker. This now opens the chemist door. Take the oxygen from inside, go to Alba level Section A and get the empty tank, go to Coma level Section A. Put these in factor unit and you will now receive an air tank. Go into the danger room once the Vacuum has gone put the tank into the locker for future use.
12. Now go to Byer level Section E and get the calculating machines then go to Coma level Section B and get the steps, then go to Farr level (via the vacuum danger room) and to Section G go into the Games room and put the steps and the calculators in factor unit. You now have a snakes and ladders game. Put this in the key locker and the door will unlock to Section C.
13. Go to Alba Section D and into the Director room, get the first key to m-central. Go to Byer Section E and into the banker door, get key 2. Then go to Farr Section G and get key 3. Take these through to Section C and take the down lift to Hale level (at last). Go to Section H and put key 2 in Southernist locker and key 3 in other one. M central door between these is now unlocked. Go through and into Section E and into the sanctum door. You have now completed Phase 1.



STARQUAKE

This game hasn't been out long but already it has attracted a lot of attention from tipsters. These tips were compiled with help from Jason Naylor **of Leeds,** Johnny Macfarlane **of Leatherhead,** Adrian Whitehouse **of Brackley,** M Hall **of Houghton,** MJ Musgrove **of Bracknell,** David Gardner, David Russell **and** Peter Rump **of** Bromley, Andrew Bradley **of Ludlow,** C Jala **and a cast of thousands!**
Listed below are code words for the teleport:
VEROX ASOIC
QUAKE EXIAL
ULTRA SONIQ
AMIGA TULSA
KYZIA DELTA
ALGOL AMAHA
IRAGE RAMIX
OKTUP

You must remember when you are using the flyer that you cannot pick up pieces of the core. If you see an object like a security card then take. This gives access to the security doors which allow entry to other parts of the maze. It also allows you to use the cheops.

BACK TO SKOOL

At the time of writing this game has only been released for a couple of days but Robert Allen **of Banbury has already sussed out some of the problems contained in the game.**

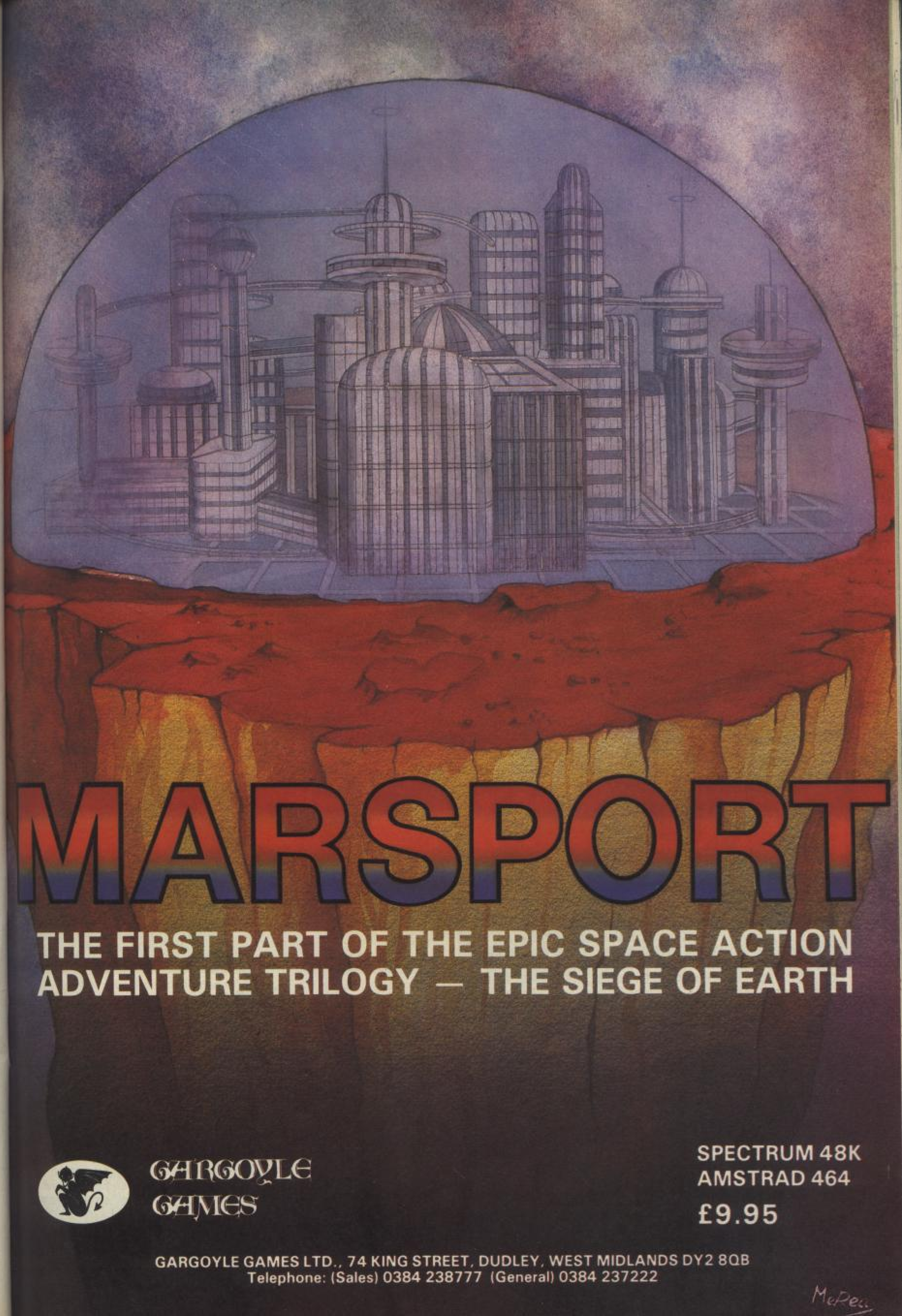
When the game starts go to the Boy's School and search every desk for the Water Pistol. If you find one then go to the area with three cups on a shelf and shoot them. They will turn blue for every one you hit. Now go up three stairs and aim the catapult at the cups. When a teacher comes along fire at the cups, some water should be knocked out. If the water touches a teacher then they tell you a number, note this down. Do this to four teachers and write the numbers down on a blackboard, you can now ride the bike. If the Skool gate is shut then pedal the bike towards it and stand on the saddle when you get near it. When the bike hits the gates you will be thrown over.

FAIRLIGHT

If you're into platform games then this is one of the best but now thanks to Stewart Beatt **it is possible to get a bit further with these codes. Just go to the options screen and enter these codes into the code option.**
SCREEN 4) 1HB
SCREEN 7) LTO
SCREEN 10) JDP
SCREEN 13) MLB
SCREEN 16) DVJ
SCREEN 22) PHH
SCREEN 25) XNR

It is 7 am in the morning and I have just finished writing this column, there is no sign of the sun and the only sound is that of a gently slumbering Liddon. Time to go to bed I think and then I realise that there is an interview to write up. Ah well there's no rest for the overworked and underpaid brigade. I hope you all have a happy Christmas, I know that I won't because I will have to get the next issue of the Playing Tips written ...

Robin Candy is allowed to appear by kind permission of Mangram Inc. Large white hankies, tastefully embroidered with the Candy/Mangram monogram, are available on request for the collection of readers' tears after listening to the heart-rending story of Robin's hard life. If he has the strength to struggle through opening all his Christmas pressies, he'll no doubt be back next year — Lloyd willing. In the meantime, any tips etc, send to ROBIN CANDY'S PLAYING TIPS, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB



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Okay.
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BOO!
Warned You! Now take a look at the delightful piccie we've lovingly reproduced in black and white on this page (didn't want any red, pretend blood frightening anyone, did we?).

CUT TO VOICE OVER BY CARING, UPPER CLASS FEMALE PERSON:
"On the left, we have JASON, modelling the very latest in High Couture cotton boiler suits as supplied by the Army and Navy stores just down the road from Domark's London Offices. You will notice that Jason is wearing some very adventurous headgear from the local Ice Hockey club, and sets off his entire outfit with a cheeky little accessory, the very latest in rubber carving knives. (Ideal for giving the office cat a nasty moment or two, when it realises you can't actually cut up its Whiskas for it, and it's going to have to chew some grub for itself.)

"On the right, showing how the well dressed Jason-in-the-street wears the off-the-shoulder nylon boiler suit when not out on the rampage, we have JASON, who has borrowed a few stylistic nuances from Jason, and also sports a skimpy little facemask, this time in light grey. To mark out his individuality from the crowd, JASON has decided to set off the whole ensemble with a wobbly rubber axe, from the Joke Shop, just by Tottenham Court Tube.

"Both Jason and JASON find that travelling to work in the morning a real chore, and have opted for the ultimate in comfort when it comes to footwear — slaughterman's wellingtons. Unfortunately, our photographer cropped the picture rather cruelly, and Jason and JASON's lower limbs appear to be missing."

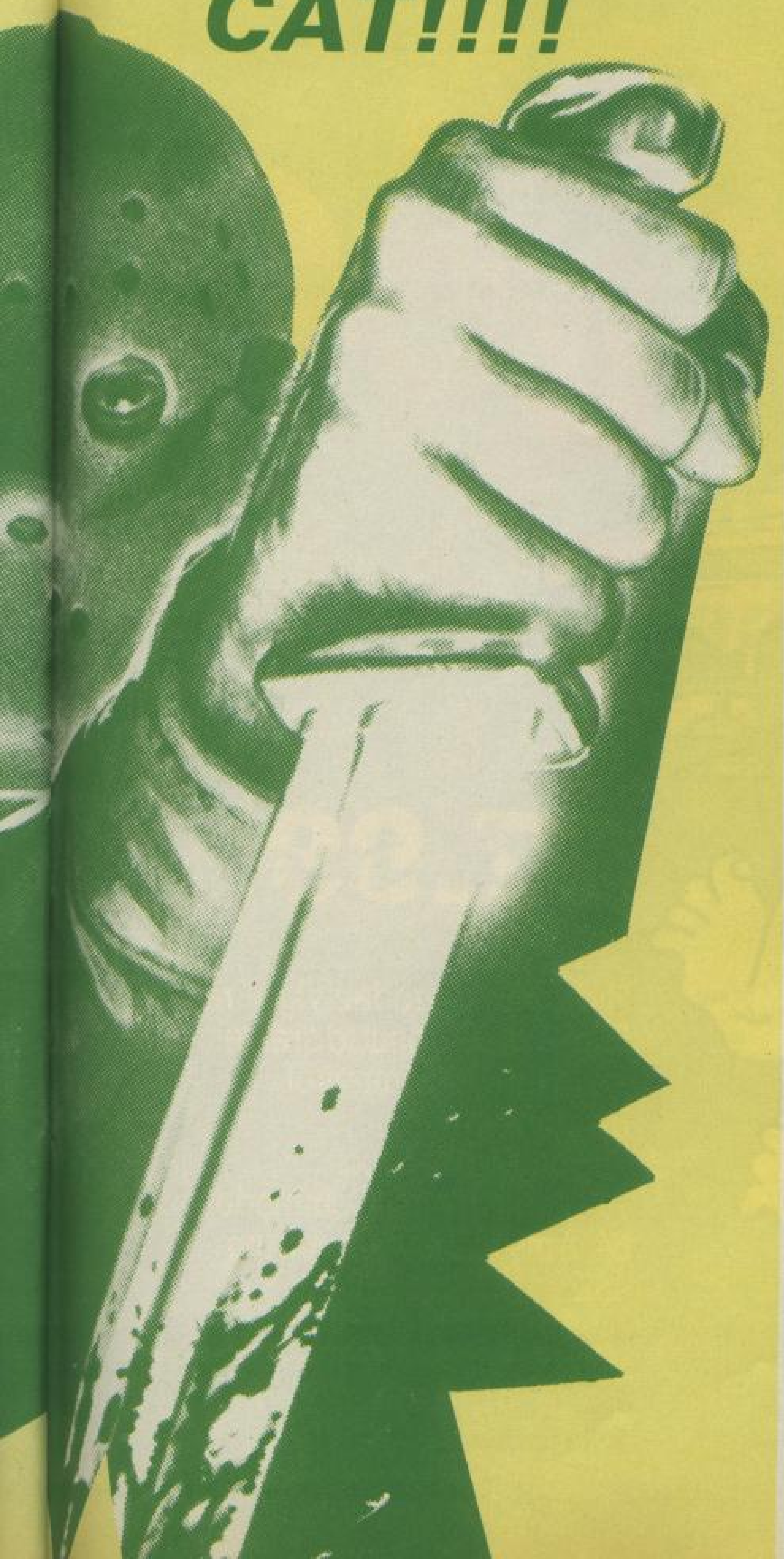
No really, you can come out from behind the sofa now. It's Not JASON and Jason really — only Mark Strachan and Dominic Wheatley of Domark having an eye-crossing time of it. What we want you to do is write a caption for the photo — or perhaps a couple of hundred words describing the scene it depicts.

Best contribution will win its author a weekend trip to a dungeon in London — better known as the London Dungeon. Domark will stump up the cost of the return rail trip to London for two people, and will throw in two nights dinner bed and breakfast at a good London hotel as well. Don't get too cut up if you don't win top prize — fifty Domark T Shirts will go to the runners up.

The top prize is not for the faint-hearted, though, as the London Dungeon specialises in horrorshow waxworks, bringing to life a few of the less "tea-time" aspects of history. So don't bring your Marmite Soldiers with you if you win!

ENTRIES PLEASE TO: Gosh! I'm weally fwitened!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by the end of January.

TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE RIGHT NOW IF YOU'RE A SCAREDY CAT!!!!



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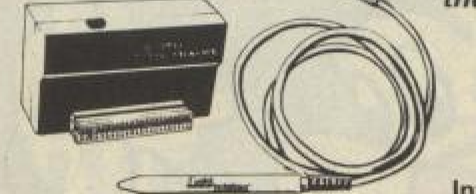
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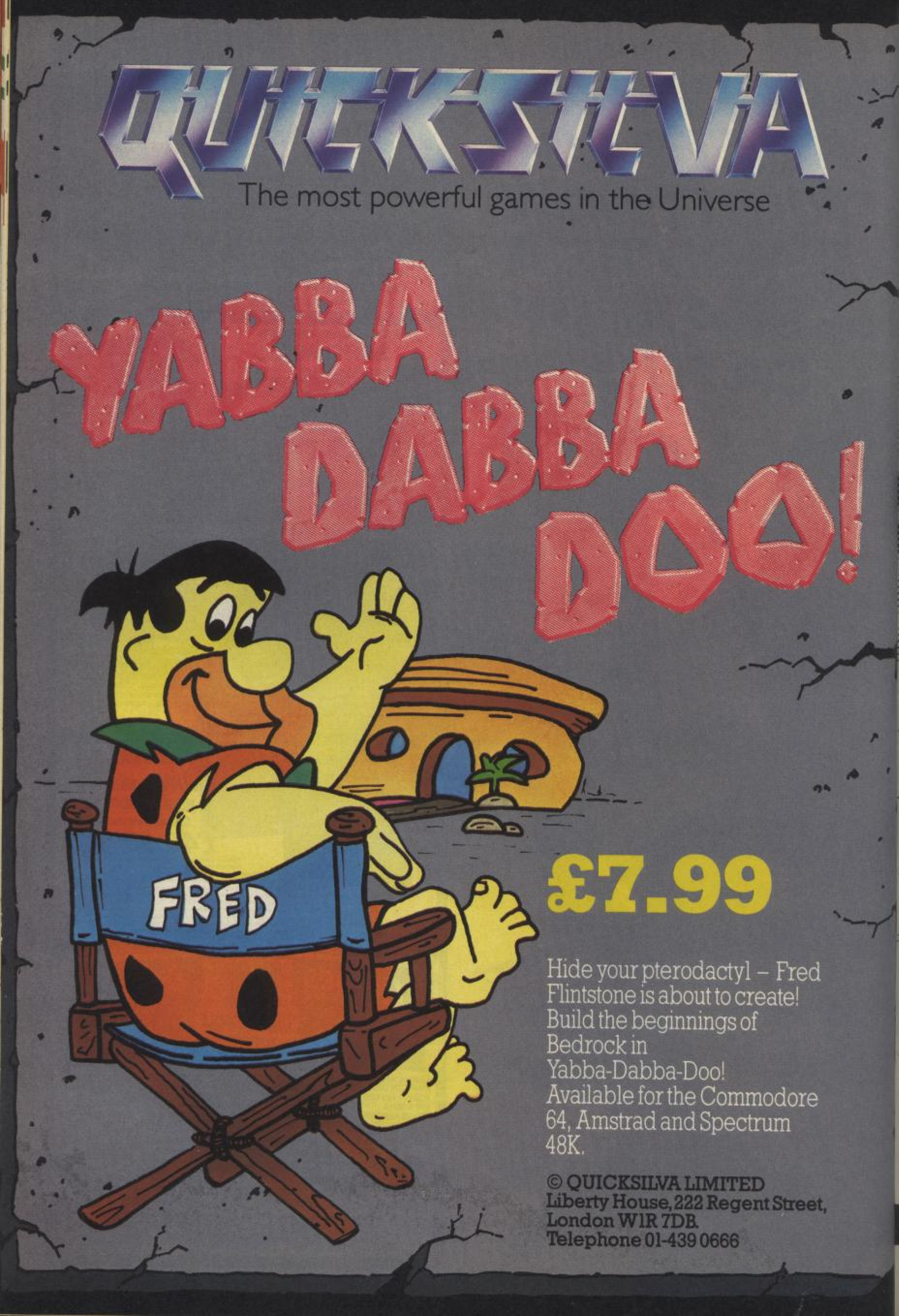
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WIN ZOIDZILLA in the DESIGN A ZOID COMPETITION



Your Chance to Give Jeremy (I Want A Zoid) Spencer something new to dream about

The helpful David Martin, Big Cheese at MARTECH, the company which is bringing you ZOIDS, the game, has got together with the Zoid People at Tomy to offer you the chance to win your very own ZOIDZILLA. And a copy of the game, and a little Zoid and a big Poster! Twenty runners up will pick up a copy of Martech's game, designed by the Electronic Pencil Company, a small zoid and a poster. Then thirty more winners will have their very own Zoid poster to pin up on their bedroom wall.

So that's the prizey bit out of the way: what have you got to do, in order to beat the evil Jeremy Spencer to Zoid ownership in this competition? (*It's Okay folks, I've banned Spencer from entering the comp* — **ED**). Well, in the game, you become one with a Zoid, sitting in its control cockpit and travelling over a hostile planet, doing battle with the baddie zoids on your quest to reassemble Zoidzilla.

The game has a neat mixture of strategy and arcade action, and is controlled with the now-trendy icons.

▶ To win a prizipoos, you'll have to sit down and design a Zoid. You can go as far as you like with your Zoid design, from sketching out the basic components and weapon systems to submitting a complete specification accompanied by a full set of technical drawings in isometric projection. Go as far as you like!

And if you really want to round off your entry, you might wish to provide a little picture of your Zoid in action on the surface of the planet **Zoidstar**. Put together a little Zoid portfolio, in fact, as if you were the designer of the new fighting machine who had to get his idea accepted.◀

Plenty to keep you busy, thinking and designing, over the Christmas Pud eating season. Get your entries in by the end of January, cos we'll make Jeremy judge the competition on 30th of that month — with any luck we should get a colour snap of him going green with envy.

Get those Zoids in to, CRASH ZOIDSMITH COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

COME UP WITH THE ULTIMATE COMBAT ZOID AND WIN, WIN, WIN



By way of a Christmas treat, we present a short story from the pen of Wilf Prigmore. Meet Max Helpmann . . .

THE HUMAN TOUCH . . .

Only the very, very rich went to the Holiday Belt. Max Helpmann wasn't rich — yet he was going there. As an ex-con he shouldn't have even been aboard the Sinclairways' Shuttle now speeding beyond the reach of Earth's gravity and its law enforcement agents.

'The Lord helps those that help themselves,' grinned Max, unfastening his seatbelt and making himself comfortable. His drink tasted good. Pollution-free 'Syntheau' from one of the moon based conglomerates, reminded him of his childhood. It used to be available from a tap. Then came rumours that the treatment plants couldn't cope with the amount of bleaches, detergents and disinfectants which were ending up in the system . . . Naturally, people turned to the bottled water which, advertisers assured everyone, was far more healthy. If you wanted free water after that, the only way was to sink a well in the garden.

Max skipped over memories of the next twenty-odd years and concentrated on the events which had taken place that very day. Hard to believe that only a few hours ago he'd been conning his way into homes and taking any valuables which hadn't been screwed down. (The campaign supporting screws as an ideal anti-theft device had been particularly compelling. To Max's way of thinking it was rather distasteful. And bad for his line of work.)

To avoid early detection of a pattern, Max liked to vary his story fairly often. He'd had some success as a 'rodent exterminator checking on black rat sightings in the area' and thought he'd do his gasman. He banged on the target's door and rushed past the startled occupier when it was opened. In reaction to Max's urgent request to check a serious gasleak, the occupier unleashed two savage-looking dogs, which sent Max stumbling back into the kitchen. Only his quick thinking - throwing the occupier's lunch on the floor between the two dogs -

saved his hide and allowed him to nip out the back door and over the wall.

'Bloody Solar Power Houses!'

The alarm was raised and Max knew he could soon have his collar felt. Figuratively speaking that is, for Max had often noticed how computer-directed lawmen these days lacked feeling! In his hurry to get away, he didn't see the man coming out of an alleyway and ran straight into him. Old habits die hard. Max apologised profusely, dusted the man down, and relieved him of his securibelt . . .

Normally, a shuttle ticket would have ended up in the street Litter-Vapourizer (Keep Earth Tidy), but not this time. It was the jammiest bit of luck to smile on Max in years. The ticket and interzonal ID Card belonged to one Arthur Plumtree, a fourth-rate impressionist who Max had been embarrassed to watch on channel 28 recently. Word was, Plumtree had bribed the producer to let him appear. The TV station got the equivalent of a month's advertising money, Plumtree got his appearance and only the viewer lost out. A flimsy escape plan fluttered in Max's mind. The odds were heavily stacked against him, of course, but who'd expect him to head for the shuttleport. Criminals never got past the check-in, did they!

'Hi, chum. Just spoke to your brother. Put money in him for a chewbar and he read my horoscope. You might say he gave me thought for food. Ha ha! Where do I stick the ID? Oh, I got it. Catch my show the other night? No, I guess not. You guys are kinda tied to the job, eh!' Max couldn't believe what he was was doing. Imagine trying to fool an Excise Droid (Mark 3 2D Klair, according to the manufacturer's label), that he was Plumtree putting on silly voices. The voice pattern strip in the ID would betray him. Oh well, it'd give the lads in Their Majesties' Prison Wadmoor something to laugh about.

'Plumtree? Arthur Plumtree?' asked the Droid officiously.

'Y-Yessir!'

'Arthur Plumtree. You are cleared for take-off.' The Excise Droid accurately spat the ID card

. . . Max knew he could soon have his collar felt. Figuratively speaking that is, for Max had often noticed how computer-directed lawmen these days lacked feeling . . .

into Max's trembling hand.

That was about all Max could remember of what had gone before. (Apart from the smell of fear rising from his armpits). The ride on the travellator, boarding and lift-off - these were all like areas of fresh, untrodden snow in his brain. But now he felt good. He had beaten the unbeatable machine. The human touch was still supreme.

'Land ahoy!' shouted one of the merry holidaymakers, and Max found himself looking out of the porthole. Even from this distance he could see the garish lights of the holiday belt - a chain of artificial planets designed by an advertising company as the ultimate 'Shuttle away from it all' dream. They flickered like some vast, unearthly candle luring monied moths towards it. But they spelled welcome to Max. For soon the shuttle would be landing and he would be free to ply his trade.

Trade on The Belt, Max found, was far easier too ply than on Earth. Here, there was little security. The filthy rich didn't need to rob each other and the likes of Max were not permitted to travel in space, so why bother with any fancy door locks?

Back home however, it was different. Robberies at one time were so frequent and credit cards so easy to obtain that cash became obsolete. Then robbers turned to computers to hack their way into accounts, transferring funds to their own numbers. In the end, people were employed round the clock to check incoming instructions to bank computers. He had laughed about that. It had reminded him of stories that his grandfather used to tell him of men riding shotgun to guard money for Wells Fargo.

Underworld friends laughed at Max's old-fashioned ways. But he had the last laugh. Before long, computers ran everything and made themselves virtually foolproof. Much of the criminal fraternity became redundant.

Yes, it was much easier up here. While 'The Belters' were out doing their own particular things, Max was doing his. Without sophisticated electrolocks to crack, he could use the despised credit cards to let himself into hotel rooms. Old-fashioned skeleton keys, fashioned from one of his bed springs, gave him access to every drawer and cupboard. And anyone who slept with the key in their lock would not have seen Max push it onto a piece of waiting paper, pull it under the door and let himself silently in and relieve them of their jewellery.

Trouble was, it wouldn't be long before people talked and realised that they hadn't merely lost their items, but that the unthinkable had happened. Max would need to be long way away by then. But to do that he'd need to make a really big haul. Shuttle pilots only took megabribes!

Now Max had been keen to get started. All this work on The Belt was carried out over a mere twenty four hours. Having hidden his loot in a park, he was making his way back to his hotel for some well-earned rest when he passed the casino. People were coming out with wads of - money? Max blinked. He saw pictures of getaway cars screaming from a bank, notes fluttering from a suitcase as passers-by stood in amazement. Max had only seen money in a museum - people stopped using it when he was a kid . . .

It might have been the shuttle-lag, or lack of sleep, maybe even nostalgia brought about by another of Grandfathers' stories. Whatever it was, Max decided he wanted some money for himself. He'd find an excuse to get into the casino vaults and case the joint.

A crate of beer outside the cellar gave Max the excuse he wanted. He picked it up and strode purposefully down. Even in his present befuddled state Max should have been more suspicious. More cash than he'd ever managed to count in his mind to induce sleep lay before him in boxes next to the crisps. Grabbing an armful, he threw it madly above his head and enjoyed the new sensation of notes skidding off his head and face.

'If Sir would just care to leave his account number, we will gladly fetch the chips to the table for him!' A Tuxedoed figure looking patronisingly down at him. A few drinks and people did the most incredible things!

Max was embarrassed. Casino chips - made of paper? What a gimmick But they were not negotiable outside the casino. What a fool!

'I think you'd better have a word with Lowsy, Umble and Vyle, sir!'

Max gulped. They must be what passed as law in these parts, or the casino's heavy boys. Either way he didn't like the sound of it.

The coffee in front of Max reassured him. He was alone in the room save for a large screen on one wall. Why give him coffee if they were going to do nasty things to him? He started when the screen spoke to him.

'Welcome Max!''

'Wh-what the-? My name's not Max. You've got the wrong man. And where are the three I'm supposed to see?'

'Lowsy, Umble and Vyle, you mean? That's me, Max. But you can call me Luv for short. I'm an advertising agency you see. Silly I know, but it's traditional to have several names. I've noticed you're a traditionalist in your own way Max. That's why you're here. Oh, you think you were so clever getting here. But while you were putting on your ridiculous act, my Excise Droid was telling me all about you. I ordered him to let you on the shuttle.'

Max was lost for words. Luv, however, wasn't. She continued.

'I Max, am a computer. We took over the advertising business a year ago. I was - am - the best agency there's ever been. You may know some of my work. The bottled water campaign was good. Kept me at the top of the league for ages. The others were green with envy. Then the plastic credit cards. My idea . . . Trouble was I never got the idea patented so everyone else jumped on the bandwaggon. You know the result. After that things got boring. Nobody went out and bought things on impulse anymore - they just ordered things they saw on the TV screen. And it never looked as good as the real thing, so not many people bothered. I could see a slump coming so I invested my money in the Holiday Belt. The press said it was a bad move . . . I came up to personally see to the operation. It's working. But I want to go back down. Start a campaign that will shake them all up. And that campaign will happen - because of you Max.'

'Sorry, I don't follow Luv. I don't know anything about advertising except that I hate it! Flaming bottled water and plastic money!'

. . . he saw pictures of getaway cars screaming from a bank, notes fluttering from a suitcase as passers-by stood in amazement. Max had only seen money in a museum - people stopped using it when he was a kid . . .

'Quite Max, but with your help things will change. I am going to shake the world with my exciting new concept of commercialism - cash! Money. It will be the greatest thing since sliced bread. A bit before your time Max, but I modestly admit that that too, was my idea!'

'You're crackers! It'll never catch on!'

'But it will, Max. You love money, don't you? Look at your behaviour in the casino vaults just now! I tell you it's a winner! We sell it on nostalgia. We tell people it's wholesome, old-fashioned and what they've been missing - the human touch - you've shown me the importance of that Max.! Take the money out to a shop - see people - talk about your personal problems. Money will bring you friends, happiness.'

'I think you have a point there Luv. And if you patent money, nobody else will be able to make any. They'll have to come to you for it! And I could go round nicking it from them - so they'd have to get more!'

'You're a fast learner Max. I have seen the correlation between cash and human emotion. We will play on that emotion to make them part with the cash. I desire to be respected, and this scheme will secure it. Look, Max, I have even designed the notes. Pretty aren't they? I searched my memory dump and came up with the motifs. Something called 'knitting pattern!' But very human, I think. I would like you to have these first copies as a gift. A first payment.'

Max stifled a laugh as he accepted the notes. His mind was already racing. He didn't want to work for a stinking computer, but it might serve his purposes for the time being. His grandfather had been a money forger in the last great money age and Max had inherited his artistic talents . . .

When Luv's campaign got underway, Max Helpmann was planning to get very, very rich!

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

Twenty eight Ballblazer Cassettes to be won

THREE VTX5000 MODEMS UP FOR GRABS

Any day now, Activision will be releasing the Spectrum version of *Ballblazer* into the games arena. The rough boys on our sister magazine, ZZAP! haven't been able to stop playing the Commodore version since it arrived in the office. In fact they've made it the GOLD MEDAL game in their Christmas Special.

It's going to be really neat on the Spectrum. Some people say, even better than on the C64, but we'll have to wait a few more weeks before that little rumour is proved or disproved. Either way, it looks bound to be a brill game.

The action takes place in an arena, where battles between two combatants controlling specially designed craft take place. The aim of the game is to seize control of a ball of matter with your craft's force field, scamper up to your opponent's goal and blast it between the moving goalposts. Your opponent, which can be the computer or a real life chum, is trying to do just the same to you — so the action gets fast and furious.

But such a simplistic description belies the addictive nature of the game. The playing area — not unlike a football pitch in design — is a large chequerboarded area, which curves over the horizon. You can't see down the length of the pitch as a result, which means you have to go hunting for the ball.

The screen is split into two horizontal displays — the views from the cockpit of your craft and your opponent's. When you can see his craft on your display, he sees yours on his. To make life more interesting, the goalposts move — and the gap between them gets smaller after each goal.

Fast and furious action indeed, and you could be among the first Spectrum owners in the country to play *Ballblazer*, courtesy of this Activision Christmas comp. Top three prizes are a copy of the game and a VTX5000 modem, with twenty five runners up having to make do with a copy of the game only.

To win, you'll have to put your mind into "Ball game" mode, and come up with the answers to the questions which appear here. They're all to do with primitive ball games which preceeded the ultimate contest, *Ball blazer*. Get your entries in to BALLBLAZER COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January 1986, when the draw will be made to determine who comes out top in the *Ballblazer Challenge*.

1) In which games which involve a ball do you find:

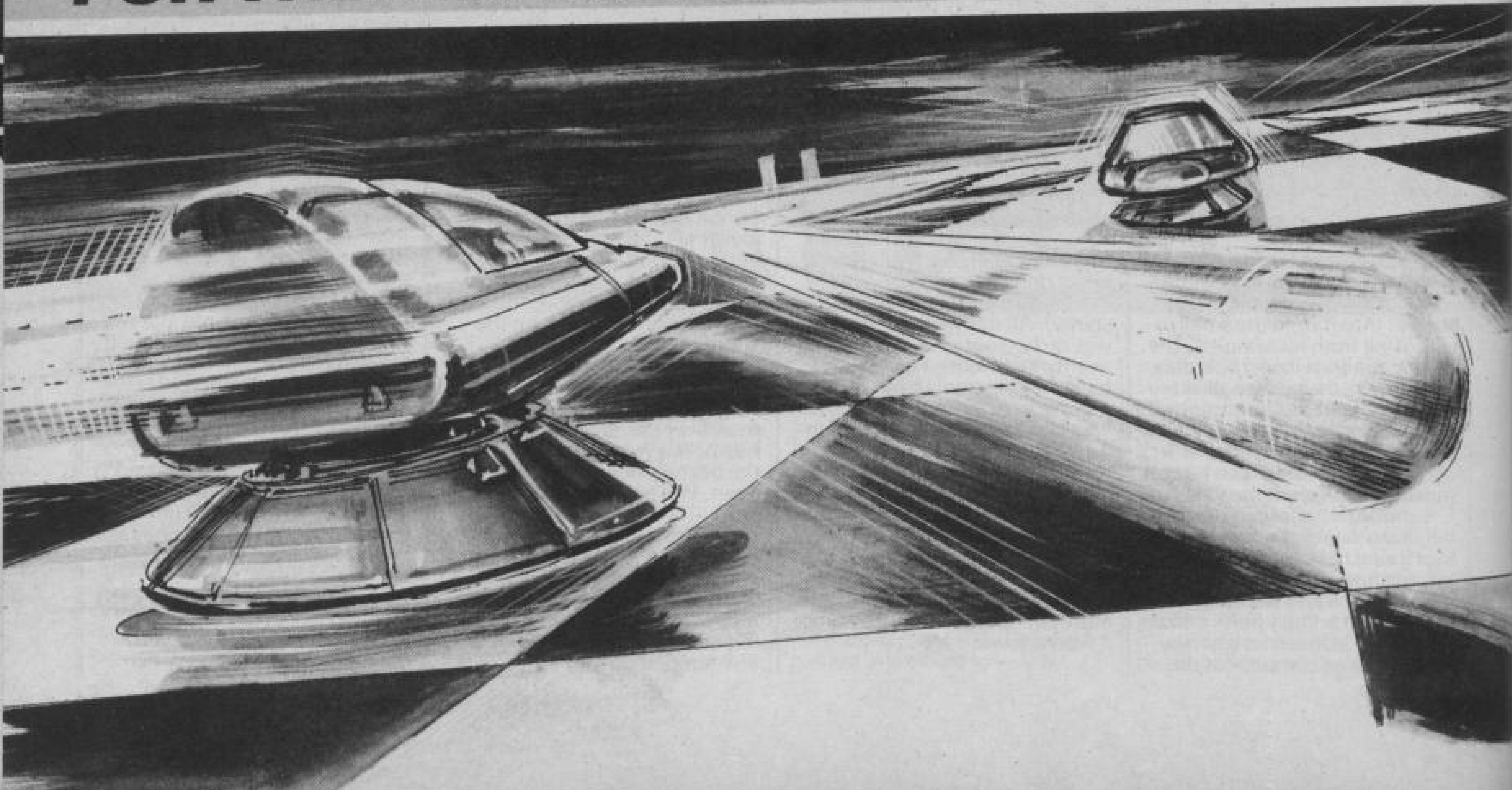
a) A strike
b) A break
c) A conversion
d) A boundary hit
e) A set
f) An offside
g) A rollover
h) A jack
i) A birdie
j) A fairway
k) Cradling

2) How many players per side in the following ball games:

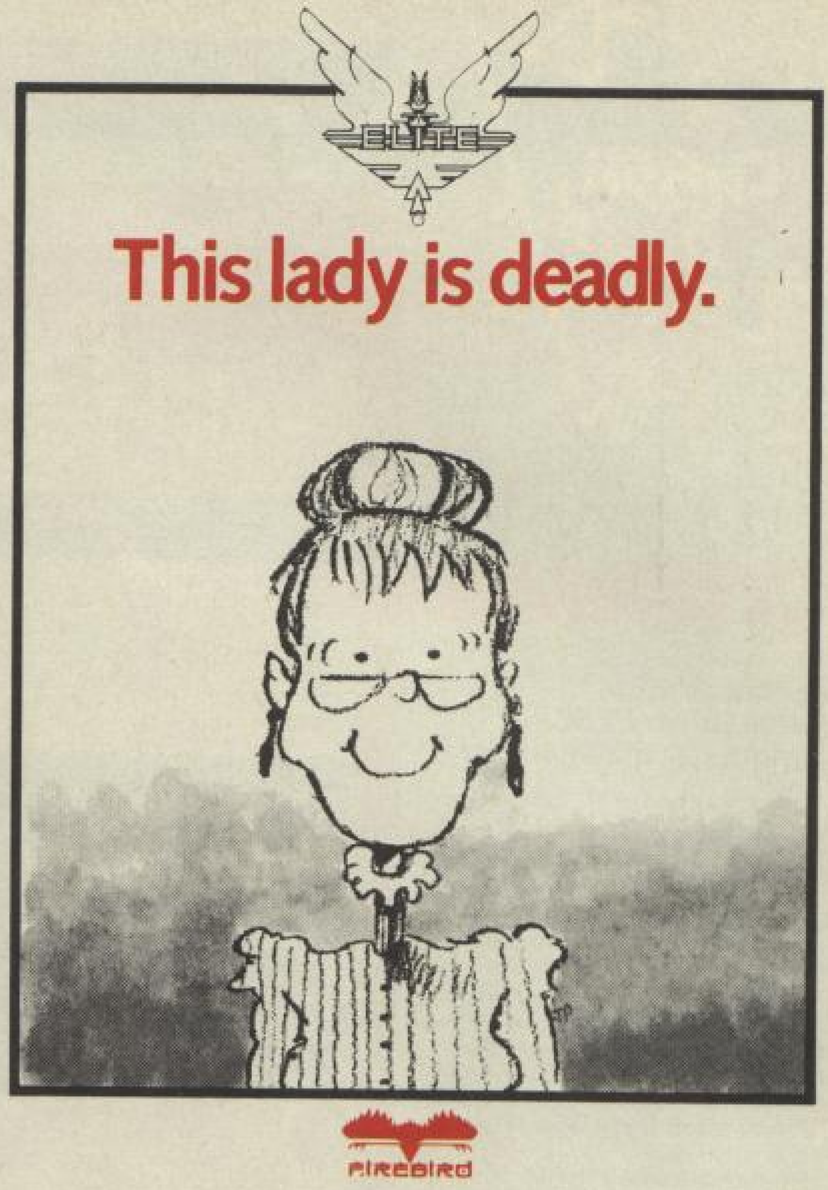
a) Rugby Union
b) Rugby League
c) Football (easy one, huh?)
d) American Football
e) Hockey
f) Lacrosse
g) Cricket
h) Basketball
i) Baseball

Crash Competition

FOR THE ACTIVISION BALLBLAZER COMP




ELITE
This man is harmless.
MUM
FIREBIRD


ELITE
This lady is deadly.
FIREBIRD


ELITE
This girl is dangerous.
FIREBIRD


ELITE
This boy is a fugitive.
FIREBIRD

A CRASH Smash

C·O·M·M·A·N·D·O



COMMANDO

Producer: Elite
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

Elite's *Commando* is the licensed version of the classic Capcom arcade game which has captivated thousands and thousands of arcade gamers all over Britain.

The game involves you taking the role of a super crack commando with a mission to penetrate deep behind enemy lines and destroy their two main fortress. This mission takes place over a vertically scrolling landscape and you, armed with a few grenades and a sub machine gun, have to take on the entire enemy army single handed. There are boxes of grenades lying around the battlefield which you can pick up to replenish you stocks, but otherwise you just have to use your skill, reflexes and sub machine gun to survive.

To reach each fortress you first have to go through four areas, each with its own mini fortress at the end. When you take a mini fortress you are transported to the second area, and so on until you reach the main fortress. If you take and destroy that then you'll start the second mission which has to be completed in similar style, although the landscape and soldiers are far more hostile.

When you approach a fortress its doors open and loads of soldiers pour out, spewing bullets from their guns and lobbing grenades all over the shop. To take the fortress you have to destroy every soldier — not a trivial task. When you've killed all the soldiers then your man automatically runs through the fortress gates, a message of congratulations is printed up on screen and you'll be transported to the next area.

Each area has its own features and hazards. Level one is comparitively easy, but by the time you reach level four the going gets really tough, with lots of obstacles to thwart swift for ward progress. Naturally, there are loads of enemy soldiers swarming all over the place, but luckily they're only armed with single shot rifles and grenades. Even so their sheer number often becomes totally overpowering.

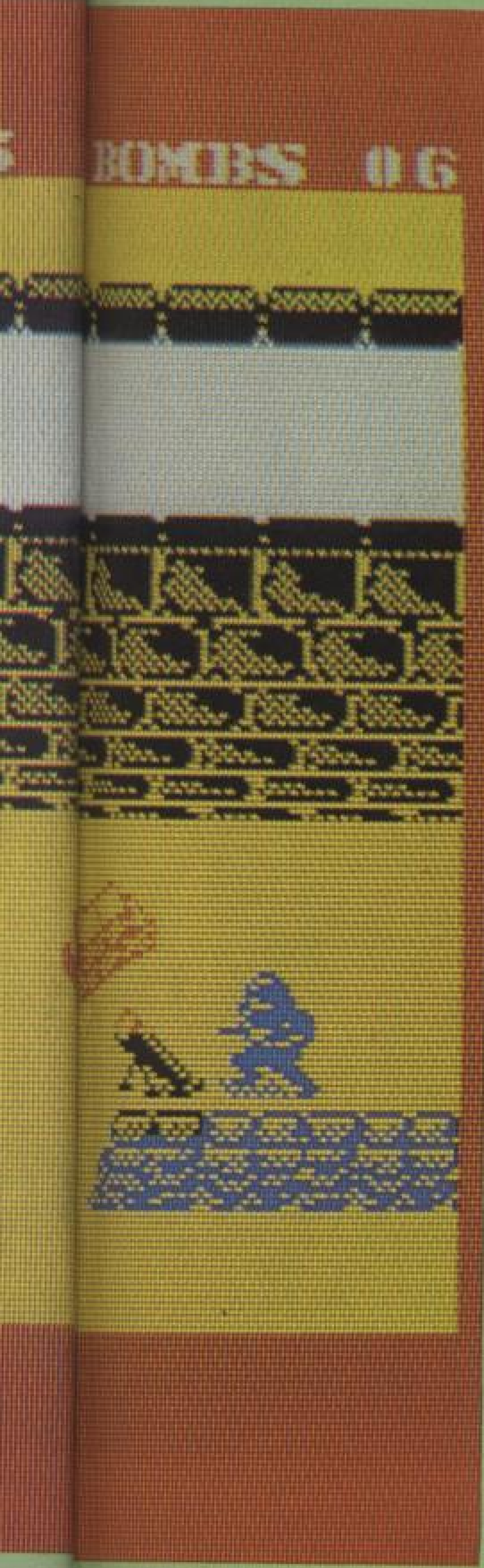
There are two specialist weapons used by enemy soldiers: bazookas and mortars. Mortar bombers don't pose too much of a threat, since they can only fire one pretty inaccurate shot at a time. Bazooka carriers, on the other hand, are deadly and fire round after round of lethal shells which explode in a large cloud of deadly flak.

Vehicles trundle about the landscape. They come in various shapes and sizes and include trucks, jeeps and motorbikes. They've all got to be avoided, but can be destroyed with a well-aimed hand grenade. Jeeps can cause problems, as they carry a gunner armed with a sub machine gun and spell doom if you're not busy pegging it in the opposite direction. Lorries, too, are deadly and carry many soldiers which pile out when their transport stops.

The landscape is very barren — well, what do you expect for a desert? Dotted around are trees, little hills (usually the enemy come belting down the slopes) and rivers (there are always bridges to cross them — you might be a commando but you can't swim!).

Area one is pretty deserted with only a few trees and hills, although there is a bridge which you have go under. The bridge is narrow, and there's usually plenty of enemy soldiers just waiting to pounce on you on the other side. After the bridge there are rocks which the enemy use for cover and after them, the first mini fortress.

Area two is where things start getting tough. Foxholes filled with soldiers block your path, and the only way to kill the soldiers is by lobbing grenades on them. While you're trying to do that they're busily trying to machine gun you down, just to make your life a misery. There are also another two bridges, one to go under and one to go



over (it gets you across a river). Buildings and bunkers start to make an appearance too. Yet more soldiers pour from the buildings, while a fusillade of bullets comes from the bunkers.

Areas three and four feature all the hazards found in the earlier sections, only in far greater numbers. On area four, the final run up to the first fortress, you are forced to cross an airport which has lookout towers complete with machine gun wielding soldiers at the top.

The areas which lead to the second fortress are diabolical, by comparison with what goes before them. And if you manage to destroy the second fortress then you'll be transported back to the very first area, to start over, but the enemy are more numerous and they fire more accurately.

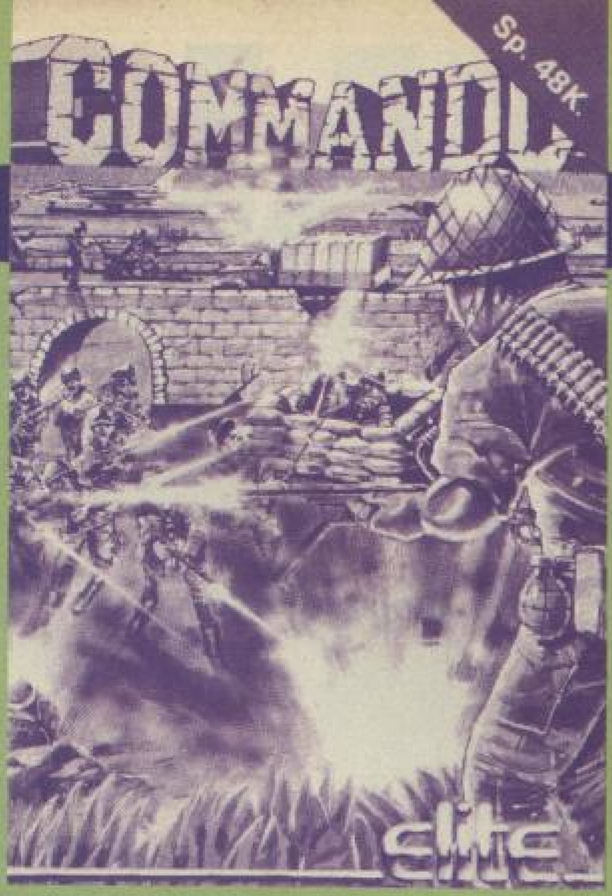
Points are awarded for disposing of enemy soldiers and vehicles and a hefty bonus can be earned by killing two guards who hold a colleague of yours prisoner. Once you liberate your ally, he disappears, rather than helping you fight your battle, however.

CRITICISM

● **'Speaking as someone who's youth was spent toggling the joysticks of arcade games this is about the best arcade conversion your Spectrum is likely to see. The arcade machine had some of the most photographic graphics and brilliant stereo sound — naturally these have been lost in the transition from megabyte memory 68000 to 48K Z80. Nevertheless, the rest of the game has faithfully been incorporated - all eight areas have been copied with meticulous attention. All the hillocks, trees, bridges and everything are all there - the soldiers even attack from the same points! The highscore table is the same as the arcade one too, with its spinning letters and all that. The gameplay is brilliant, although playing with the keys is a bit of a pain — it all gets rather confusing at the end of an area. If you want a game for Christmas then look no further than this, it's * ******** amazing!'**

● *'Elite have done a brilliant job, converting this arcade game for the Spectrum. The action is fast and furious, and should present a lasting challenge to anyone addicted to shoot em ups. Plenty of practice will be needed to get far into the game — it's very easy to concentrate on wiping out the enemy but you've got to remember to dodge their bullets too! Horribly violent, and not much of an intellectual challenge — but great fun. Get it.'*

● 'I must confess that I never expected this game to turn out quite as well as it did. I found the game very easy to get into and not so easy to leave alone. The movement of the characters is very effective, I particularly enjoyed the way the enemy troops jumped down from various heights and then set about trying to do you in. There are some graphics which might have been better left out — in particular to the jeep which looks more like a tape deck. All in all *Commando* is a great game for those into fast moving violence, it requires fine tuned reactions and a fair bit of daring.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Cursor, Fuller
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: rather bland
Graphics: excellent scrolling, and fast, especially with the amount of little mateys hacking about
Sound: great spot effects, but no tune
Skill levels: increasing difficulty
Screens: eight areas to fight through
General rating: A first-rate arcade conversion — very addictive indeed

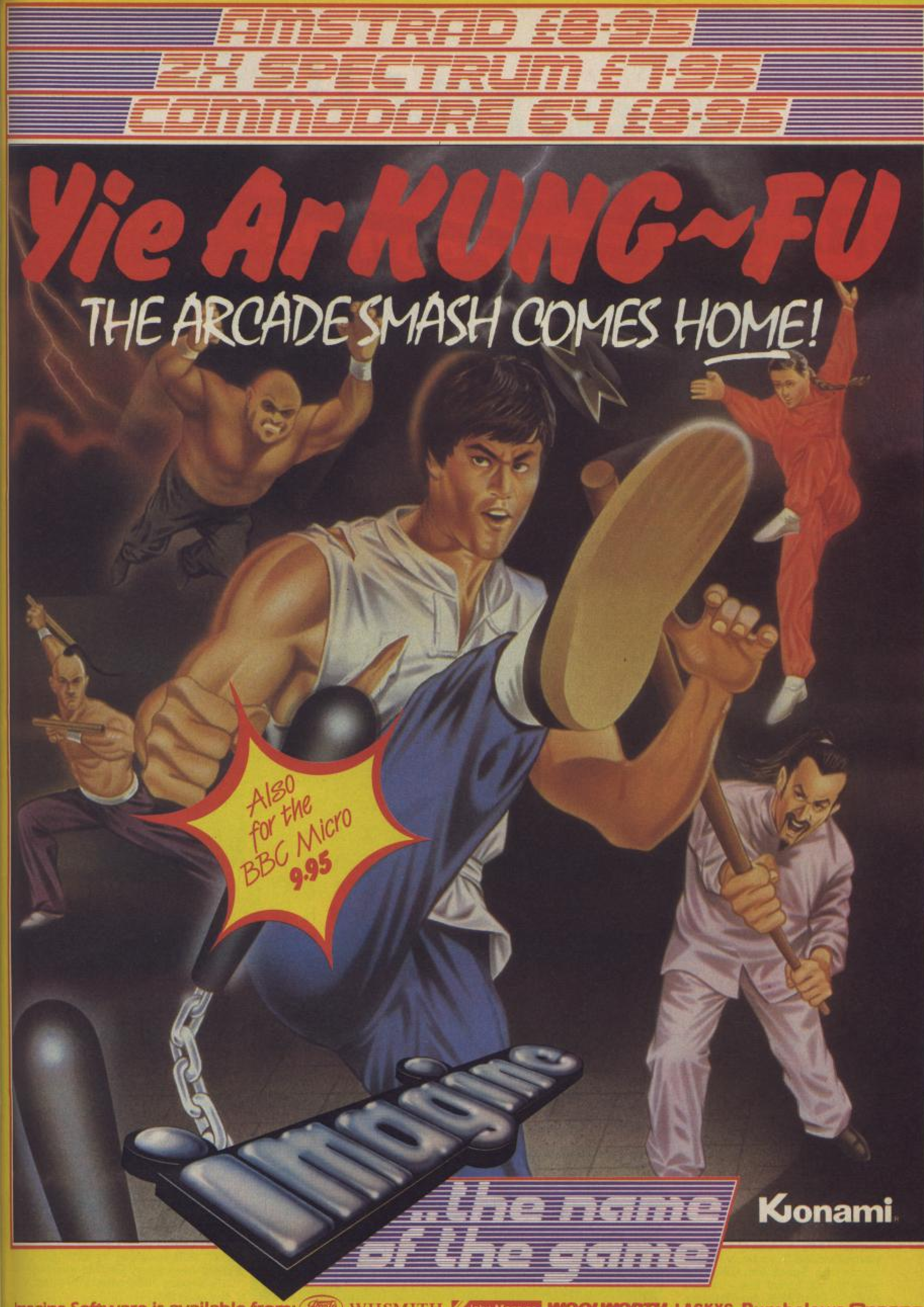
Use of computer	86%
Graphics	92%
Playability	95%
Getting started	94%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	92%
Overall	**94%**





Odin
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..the name of the game
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HERE'S A LITTLE US GOLD BRAIN TEASER

In Which your competition Minion gets his revenge . . .

Two ZX Expansion Units up for grabs and 50 Games too!



Crash Competition

Z	I	M	E	E	L	E	C	U	R	B	T	M
H	A	U	N	S	C	R	E	V	O	Y	P	O
E	A	X	T	S	S	L	N	O	X	A	Z	S
I	M	P	O	S	S	I	B	L	E	X	E	C
G	S	R	E	G	O	R	B	R	B	A	X	O
F	Y	E	L	E	N	Y	T	D	A	M	R	W
K	X	P	P	B	B	U	A	X	X	E	N	U
E	C	P	S	O	N	E	P	Y	O	U	S	N
R	O	U	U	U	H	L	P	M	N	L	B	O
T	O	N	B	H	U	N	E	O	L	B	T	I
P	T	A	C	U	E	E	R	A	I	D	L	S
Y	R	A	E	N	K	T	B	M	S	S	U	S
Z	E	R	X	T	Y	O	A	P	P	S	E	I
B	V	X	A	X	B	H	U	N	T	E	R	M

MINION'S REVENGE WORDSQUARE

Find the names of the games released by US GOLD that are lurking, hiding and generally making themselves unobvious in the following wordsquare. Heh Heh!

Before you start getting greedy, let's pause a moment and explain that one person isn't going to clear up in the competition. Two outright winners, on a first out of the bag with an all correct answer basis, will each get a Microdrive and Interface One to play with. Then no less than fifty runners up will each have a copy of *Impossible Mission* to amuse themselves with.

Right, now we've got that sorted, on with the competition instructions. Behold, for it is a wordsquare. Now, you wouldn't think we'd let you get away with anything too easy, just because it's the Festive Season, now would you? Goooood. You will note that the said wordsquare comes without a list of words for you to find . . . spotted that yet. No? Go and check and come back here when you have.

Hello again. We haven't put the words in, 'cos they're not words. They're titles of US Gold games which have been released on the Spectrum. They are split up all funny too — KING KONGS REVENGE, for instance, had it been an Ocean Game, might appear in this wordsquare as KINGKONGS REVENGE. Two words, you see, rather than one. Or maybe as KING KONGS REVENGE — three words or even KINGKONGSREVENGE: one.

What you've got to do, is hunt through, and find out how many US GOLD game-names there are, hidden away in the wordsquare. And I'm simply not going to tell you how many game names I've hidden away. Not after all the fuss you made about minor irregularities in certain other wordsquares. So there. NYA NYA. You'll just have to keep looking until you've found them all. (Hee Hee!)

And when you've come up with as many names as you can find, jot them on the back of a sealed envelope, add your very own name and address and whizzzzz your entry off to US GOLD WORDSQUARE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January next year. Or this year, if it's already 1986 when you go to the post box.



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....

....

CRASH

WIN AN OLI ORIGINAL!
In the Extra Special CRASH Christmas Quiz







After a little bit of arm twisting (and the promise of a Gin and Martini or two) your very own Competition Minion is proud to be able to announce that he has persuaded our very own Oliver Frey to offer a whizzo prize this Chrimble. No less than a signed Oliver Frey original.

For a bit of fun, Oli's drawn this bijou scenette, not once, but twice. Second time around, he made a few changes and it's up to you to work out exactly what they were. After close inspection of Versions A and B of the piccie, ring round the differences in Picture B, complete the entry form and whizz it off in an envelope to CRASH OLI COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January.

To make your faithful Minion's life that little bit easier in 1986, write the number of differences you spotted on the back of the envelope. Go on, be helpful for once, eh?

First all-correct answer out of the extra special hat on the appointed day will win its sender a personally airbrushed Oli Original. And the winner will be invited up to Ludlow to be presented with her or his prize, in person, by the veritable OLIVER FREY. And if you're really lucky, we might just show you round CRASH Towers and throw in a pub lunch or something. Depends on how the tea kitty's doing at the time, but we should be able to rustle up your railfare, too.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

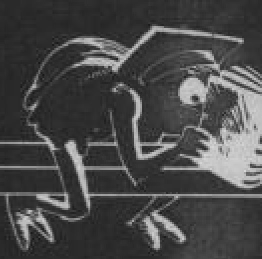
....

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POST CODE ....

DON'T FORGET TO MARK HOW MANY DIFFERENCES YOU SPOTTED ON THE BACK OF THE ENVELOPE

CRASH COURSE



Rosetta McLeod

A LITTLE LEARNING FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON?



This month, with the help of a panel of children, Crash Course looks as some Christmas crackers!

First of all, though, there is some good news on the educational front. A new organisation, British Educational Software Associates, has recently been set up to improve the availability and distribution of educational software. Eight firms (ASK, Bourne, Calpac, Collins, Griffin, Hill MacGibbon, MacMillan and Widgit) **have formed this new marketing consortium to help selected retailers service a market which, according to Roy Davey, marketing director of Collins Soft and Hill MacGibbon, is 'diffused and frustrated'. He feels, quite rightly, that schools have difficulty in finding a retailer who offers a good choice of software together with a fast ordering service, and who allows the customer to view programs before purchase. BESA has now appointed 200 retailers throughout Britain who will stock a 'core list' of 40 programs and will be able to meet orders for other titles from some 250 in the catalogue within 48 hours. Support for retailers will be handled by** Proteus, **the leading educational software distributor.**

This is a very welcome move, both from the point of view of schools and of home users. Up till now, most of the high street stores have paid only lip-service to the area of educational software, and it is hoped that the promotion of BESA in local newspapers and in information hand-outs to schools will begin to rectify matters. If the experiment proves successful, the consortium would hope to expand in 1986. More information about BESA can be obtained from BESA at 4 Little Essex Street, London, WC2R 3LF, Tel: 01 836 6633.

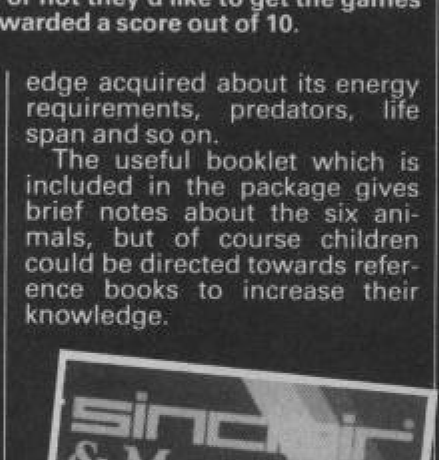
But now on to this month's software selection. I asked a panel of children, ranging in age from 7 to 13 years, to look at the programs with me, and to decide whether or not they'd like to get the games for Christmas. Each game was awarded a score out of 10.

SURVIVAL

Producer: Sinclair/ Macmillan (Science Horizons Series)
Retail price: **£7.95**
Age range: **upper primary**
Author: **Five Ways**

The programs in the Science Horizons series each concentrate on one key scientific idea and try to bring it alive for primary children. *Survival* is concerned with the basic principles of ecology (the interdependence of living things and their environment). When the program has loaded, pictures of six creatures (hawk, robin, lion, mouse, fly and butterfly) appear on the screen. The player chooses one of them, and has to keep it alive in its habitat by finding food and water and by steering clear of predators. A grid represents the world in map form, with ice caps to the north and south, and the player moves the chosen animal around, one square at a time. As the game progresses, the child will be building up a profile of each creature, based on the knowledge acquired about its energy requirements, predators, life span and so on.

The useful booklet which is included in the package gives brief notes about the six animals, but of course children could be directed towards reference books to increase their knowledge.



COMMENTS

Control keys: T, Y, U, G, J, B, N, M move the animal round the grid, P to pause, C to continue, Q to switch sound off/on, K to see a key for the habitats, SPACE to speed up the action
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: attractive
Graphics: quite good
General rating: an interesting and enjoyable program which can be used to reinforce learning, or on a self-discovery basis.
Panel's comments: We quite liked it, but it was hard to remember the control keys. We learned a lot about the animals.
7/10

GLIDER

Producer: Sinclair/ Macmillan (Science Horizons Series)
Retail price: **£7.95**
Age range: **upper primary**
Author: **Five Ways**

This is probably the weakest of the three Science Horizons programs we looked at. Its aim is to acquaint the user with the scientific principles of gliding — taking into account the need for rising currents of warm air (thermals) and how these are influenced by what is on the ground as well as by the weather conditions and the time of the day. When the program has loaded, the player can chose the time of day, and then, when ENTER is pressed, the glider is towed to the appropriate height and released. A variometer on the right of the screen shows the rate of climb or fall, and when you reach a thermal you should press H to circle and gain as much height as you can. A rough map of the island above which you are flying is shown in the booklet, with a key to the thoroughly confusing list of symbols used. You can get the Air Traffic Controller's report on your performance together with your final score at the end of the flight (you may have landed safely or crashed), which is a nice touch.

COMMENTS

Control keys: T, Y, U, G, J, B, N, M to change the direction of the glider, P to pause, C to continue,



SPACE to choose your time of day at the beginning of the game, and for the report and final score at the end
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: could have been used to greater effect
Graphics: dull
General rating: I'm afraid we gave this a thumbs down as lacking entertainment value, and with a minimal educational content
Panel's comments: a lot of room for improvement in the graphics and game play. The picture on the box makes the game look much more exciting that it really is. We wouldn't want it for Christmas.
4/10

CARGO

Producer: Sinclair/ Macmillan
Retail price: **£7.95**
Age range: **upper primary**
Author: **Five Ways**

The aim of *Cargo* is to demonstrate the careful planning that is needed to allow a cargo ship to carry its maximum load in safety. The player first has to load the ship making sure that the cargo is distributed evenly in the holds, and of course has to pay attention to the Plimsoll line markings in doing so. The player can select a rank (Master, Chief Officer, Second Mate, Cadet) and at the end of the game may

be promoted or demoted depending on performance. The child can also choose a starting point and a port of call — all of the ports are clearly marked on the screen map. After the ship has been loaded and has begun its journey (a line appears on the map to trace the course), the



screen display indicates how it is sitting in the water — the higher the salinity, the more bouyancy it gives to the ship. The program also gives a continuous report on conditions at sea. If you reach your port of call safely, you must unload the cargo and get your score.

This game covers a lot of ground (or should it be sea?) in terms of educational content. Children will learn about salinity and sailing conditions in different parts of the world, improving their geographical knowledge by constant reference to the map. The booklet also gives useful background information about Samuel Plimsoll.

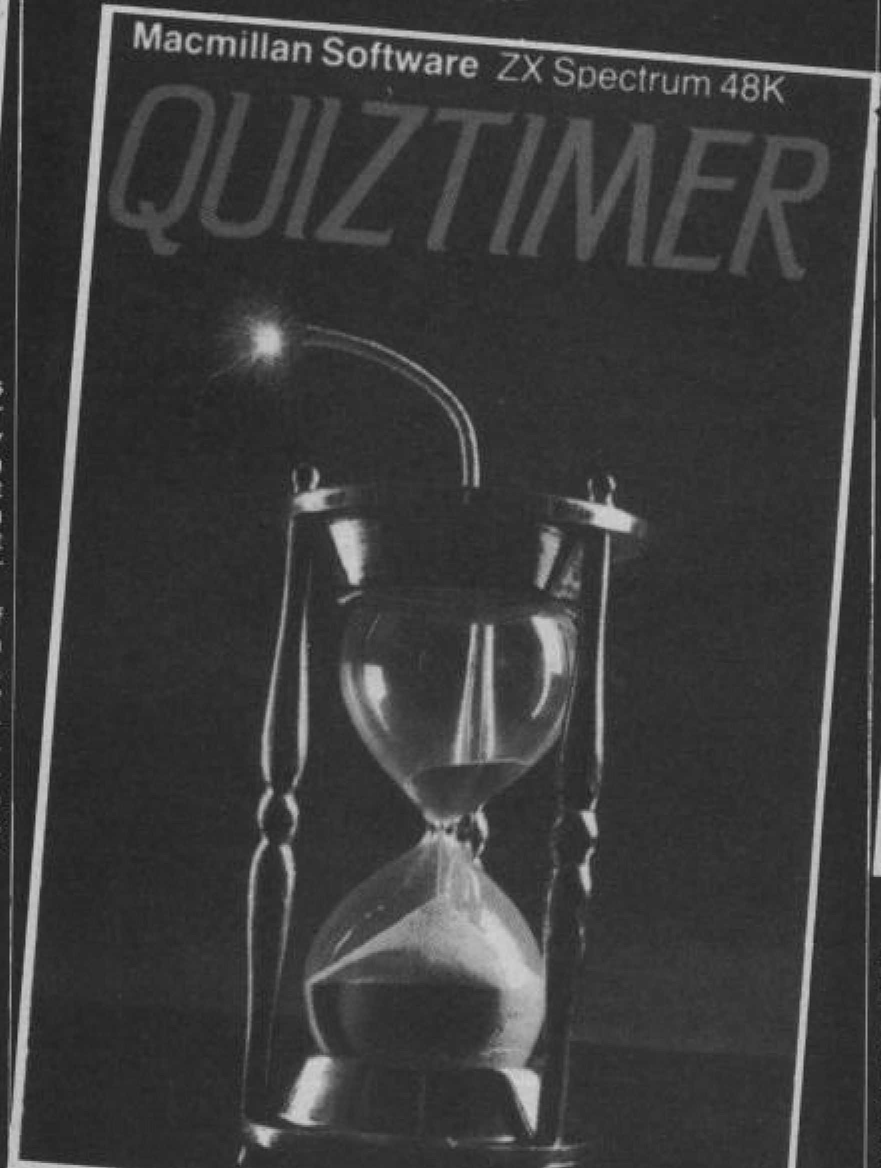
COMMENTS

Control keys: SPACE and ENTER
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: good
Graphics: excellent
General rating: a very well-designed program which is both enjoyable and educational
Panel's comments: the boys liked it more than the girls did. The map was very good and we liked the way your trail was marked by dots. The program is good value, and the boys would be happy to get it for Christmas.
Boys **8/10**
Girls **5/10**

QUIZ-TIMER

Producer: Macmillan Software
Retail price: **£5.95**
Age range: **questions can be altered to suit any age**
Author: **Blackboard Software**

There are many quiz programs on the market, and this is one of the best I've seen. The computer is ideally suited to the role of quizmaster of course, but not all the available quiz games are as flexible as this one, which can be played by one or two players, or even by two teams.



One side of the cassette contains the game and information about it, and you really have to run through the instructions quite carefully. The game consists of a word supplied with several letters missing, and also a clue. The time taken to answer the questions is also important as this will affect your score. Once the main program has been loaded, the player has to choose a password which is necessary if you want to see answers and clues before starting the game, or if you want to change the questions. The menu gives the following options: load quiz data (from a choice of 10 subjects ranging from Food and Drink to Greek Mythology); single or two player game; alter the time allowance; select pictures or words; view/alter quiz data and create and save new quiz data.

The best thing about this program is its flexibility — it has endless potential both for home use and for schools. The game is thoroughly enjoyable to play, and it also provides a useful educational experience, giving at the end a list of all the words you didn't get or that you spelt wrongly. You can also obtain a print-out of what is being shown on the screen, and the whole thing can be transferred to Microdrive if desired.

COMMENTS

Control keys: whole keyboard used
Keyboard play: fast
Use of colour: clear and vivid
Graphics: good
General rating: an excellent multi-feature game which provides superb value for money
Panel's comments: Good game! You could play it for ages without getting bored, and it was quite easy to put in you own questions. This is the best of all!
9/10

BLOCK-BUSTER

Producer: Argus Press
Retail price: **£7.95**
Age range: **7 and over**
Author: **Computertutor (Clever Clogs Series)**

Blockbuster (not to be confused with the popular TV quiz game) is a puzzle 'with a million billion variations'. The child has to make a rectangle out of 12 different blocks which appear on the screen. The screen itself is divided into three parts. At the top is the STORE where the blocks are displayed before being used; on the right is the WORKBOX where the blocks can be rotated before being positioned on the board; and to the left is the BOARD marked with a grid where the rectangle is to be made.



The game is very good for developing skills of spatial awareness, and there is also the option of playing it in its quiz version. If you get 12 questions correct, you are given a complete solution as to the creation of the rectangle. As with all the programs in the Clever Clogs series, pressing CAPS SHIFT/Q takes you to a secret Parents' Page, and enables you to reset the questions. Another useful and flexible game.

COMMENTS

Control keys: P to place a piece on the board, M to move a piece to the workbox, S to move a piece back to the store, Q to end the game, CAPS SHIFT/Q to reset the questions
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: bright and clear
Graphics: simple but effective
General rating: surprisingly difficult for young children. An adult really needs to be on hand all the time for help and advice
Panel's comments: we thought it was a reasonably good game, but it would be better for schools rather than home use.
6/10

MORE WHEEEEE, SPLAT (GENTLY)

And yet another update on how the CRASH/ZZAP!/AMTIX! Dr Barnardo and Action Group charity parachute jump is progressing. C'mon people, we need your votes to push some of our staff out of a high-flying plane — they want to go — they really do . . .

I suppose that it was inevitable that those who didn't really want to jump should attract the most votes. ZZAP's very own Mr Rignall seems to be at the top of the list and he is very concerned. When he asked me how he should go about getting out of this mess I suggested that he should try being pleasant to people which would result in his being ignored. Of course the easier alternative would be to send a few votes in himself, to try and work his way down the list. He put the proposition to his bank manager who simply refused to advance Julian the necessary funds. Strange thing was, the very next day we had some votes from a bank manager, for Julian!

Franco Frey, The Newsfield technocrat, is more than a bit disappointed that he is lying only eleventh in the jump table. I am a little surprised by this as Franco writes quite a lot for all three magazines, mostly on graphics packages, so he really deserves to considered. Someone at the last ZX Microfair really put his finger on Franco's problem, when he declared that Franco 'was a really nice guy'. The voting trend seems to be for the Newsfield equivalent of a video nasty, hence the strong showing by the likes of Gary Penn, Julian Rignall and Robin Candy. Send a nice guy aloft — Vote for Franco.

While we are on the subject of video nasties that reminds me of Mr Candy, who in truth is a good



bloke, he's just misunderstood. There seems to be something of an ego battle being conducted between Messrs Candy and Mangram. Each of them see the number of votes as a measure of popularity. This has naturally put Lloyd in a very difficult position, he isn't keen to allow his frail body to be ejected from the back of a Hercules. He is, however, just as determined not to be shown up by 'that little jumped up poke person'. The CRASH Editor Graeme Kidd seems to be attracting more votes than he bargained for, so many in fact that the worried man was caught actually trying to edit the jump table. I have now taken steps to ensure that the table is kept where Graeme can't find it, on his desk.

The software industry continues to donate prizes. Among the latest contributors are **Ocean**, **The Hit Squad**, **Incentive** and **Micromega**. The boys from Micromega, Neil Hooper to be exact, sent us a superb letter and what must be World's most awful joke, so appalling in fact we feel that it would be irresponsible to print it. We can, however, make it available to anyone daft enough to want to see it — for a mere five votes a read. And yes Neil, we would like to hear the one about His'n'Hercules. The **Ram Jam Corporation** have promised to send us a bumper box of prizes and a respectable block of votes. A sudden burst of generosity perhaps? Well not entirely, it seems AMTIX!'s Sean Masterson has upset them. Ram Jam, far from being a bunch of wallies, quickly calculated that sending a substantial number of votes for Sean would be a lot cheaper than paying the train fare for their heavy mob to come all the way up from London. Smart.

Even John Edwards, the client liaison person, has collected a vote! As yet I have been unable to track down the source but suspect that it may have come from an advertising agency, if so, send more. The Army would be truly grateful of the opportunity to test the lift capacity of a civilian-laden Hercules. I can think of no better way than by sending John, Graeme Kidd and Gary Liddon.

Remember, whoever you chose as a victim, never forget that every penny you send will go towards making a handicapped person's life easier.

This months voting recommendations:
FRANCO FREY because he's daft enough to really want to do it, and **GARY LIDDON** because he thinks he's man enough to.

Next month we shall publish, for the first time, the Jump Table so far together with the pleas and excuses of the top six.

I want .... to jump out of a very high-flying Hercules (He or she may use a parachute at their own discretion)

I enclose a donation of £..... (minimum of £1.00) and no coins please. We get charged for receiving them.

I am frequently known as ....

and can be reached at ....

....

Postcode ....

SEND YOUR VOTES AND LOOT (NO COINS!) to:

WEEeeeee SPLAT! PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

THE COMPETITIONY BIT

Name three flight simulation games

(1) ....

(2) ....

(3) ....

In fifteen words or less, using your skill and judgement and a pen, complete the phrase below in the most apt and original way:

I WANT FRANCO FREY TO JUMP BECAUSE

....

STOP PRESS! Oli offers original cover painting as a prize for the voters in the Loony Leap Charity Competition!



Welcome to the Slimedome, High Score Seekers. Not a particularly large dose of the thick gooey stuff this issue — but I might be able to persuade the powers that be to let me have a Valley rather than a small hall next ish. See you in 1986!

Doomdark's Revenge Recruited 1 giant, 2 dwarfs, 2 ley, 2 barbarians, 2 icelords and killed Shareth
Spy vs Spy beat computer's black spy on level 5
Spy Hunter 138,938 on novice
Underwurlde completed 38%
Way of the Exploding Fist beat 7th dan against computer
Darren Mawbey, East Preston, West Sussex.

Match Point Beat all levels
Underwurlde Completed 24%
Knight Lore Completed 82%
Manic Miner Completed
Jet Set Willy Completed
The Hobbit Completed with 87.5%
Match Day Beat all levels
Kokotoni Wilf Completed
Monty is Innocent Completed
Starquake Completed 49%
Tim Parsons, Hants.

Monty on the Run 4,200
Starquake 101,000 and 32% completed
Factory Breakout Completed
Way of the Exploding Fist Beat 10th dan 6 times
Hypersports gone round all events 5 times
Frank Bruno's Boxing Beat fifth fighter
Karl Tunnicliffe, Bishops's Stortford, Herts.

Underwurlde Completed
Knight Lore Completed
Manic Miner Completed
Star Force 490,000
Jason DeCat, Hayes, Middlesex

Starquake Completed with 40%
Atic Atac Completed 93%
Bruce Lee Completed 4 times
Codename Mat Completed
Ant Attack Completed
Jet Set Willy Completed
Manic Miner Completed
Alan Foule, Corsham, Wilts.

Jonah Barrington's Squash Completed all levels
Spy vs Spy Completed against computer on all levels
Hyper Sports 293,573
Peter J Grime, Oldham, Manchester

Wizard's Lair Completed with 213,530 and 89%
Starquake Completed with 307,740 and 91%
River Rescue 220,170
Fighting Warrior 29,380
Hyper Sports Completed 8 times round
Mooncresta 40,005
Mr X

Decathlon 150,000
Match Day Beaten 4-1 in final
Hobbit 22.5%
World Series Baseball 34-17
Galaxians 32,000
Paul Spencer, Glasgow

Wizards' Lair 96,120
Starquake 122,950
Highway Encounter 50,000 reached zone 0
Dynamite Dan 4 sticks of dynamite
Critical Mass 20,000
Jonathan Barrett

Frank Bruno Can beat 1,2,3,5,8
Exploding Fist 10th Dan 36 times 306,400
Wizard's Lair 33% 121,100
Fighting Warrior 97,500
Popeye 5 hearts back to Olive Oil
Frankie 98% 97,500
Nonterraqueous 23%
Gerrard Cullen

Urban Upstart Completed
Pyjamarama Completed
Tapper Punks Bar
Chuckie Egg Level 21
Hypersports Swimming 25.9; Skeet 9,200; Horse 9.99; Triple Jump 18.46; Weights 195kg
Archery 4,200 *(Stephen said that his sister scored 9,999 at the archery)*
Stephen Cheatley, Blackpool.
Interesting surname there, Steve! —**LM**

Bruce Lee Completed 17 times
Sabre Wulf Completed 82%
Spy vs Spy Grand Master spy
Everyone's A Wally Completed
Alien 8 17 chambers activated
Jet Set Willy Completed
Nightshade 27%
Airwolf 3 men saved
Oliver Dyer, Cannock, Staffs

Hypersports 178,178
Football Manager Won FA cup
Dynamite Dan 5 sticks of dynamite
World Series Baseball Beat computer 15,3
Nicola Arrowsmith, Putney, London

NEC Eating 2 in one day
J Spencer, Ludlow, Salop

Jet Pac 89,763
Frank Bruno's Boxing Andra Puncheredov
Rocco Beat the third boxer
Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Knight Lore 8 Charms
Lee Hodgkiss, Blackpool

Sabre Wulf completed 89%
Atic Atac Completed 76%
Underwurlde Completed 43%
Booty 72 pieces collected
Cauldron Collected frog
Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Bruce Lee Completed four times over
Jet Pac 84,650
Peter Halliday, Carnforth, Lancs

Alien 8 17 chambers
Bruce Lee 677,550
Spyhunter 1,000,150
Lords of Midnight completed
Shadowfire Completed
Chris Tihe-Ford, England

Underwurlde 24% completed
Nightshade 115,250
Atic Atac 115,250
Nodes of Yesod Collected 7 Alchiems
Way of the Exploding Fist 5th dan with 18,600
Airwolf 3 scientists
Pyjamarama Completed with 100%
Everyone's a Wally Completed
Full Throttle 1st on all tracks
Starstrike 2,688,895 without cheating
Shadowfire Completed
Marcus Dunne, No address

3D Starstrike 1,351,000
Beach Head Completed all levels
Highway Zone 6
Atic Atac 78%
Matchday Beaten at all levels
World Cup Won
Bruce Lee Killed wizard 6 times
Damian Tichbourne, Bristol, Avon.

Way of the Exploding Fist 10th Dan, 86,100
Atic Atac Completed with 86%
Underwurlde Completed with 59%
Knight Lore Completed after 32 days
Sabre Wulf Completed with 81%
Alien 8 Completed
Ben, Bristol

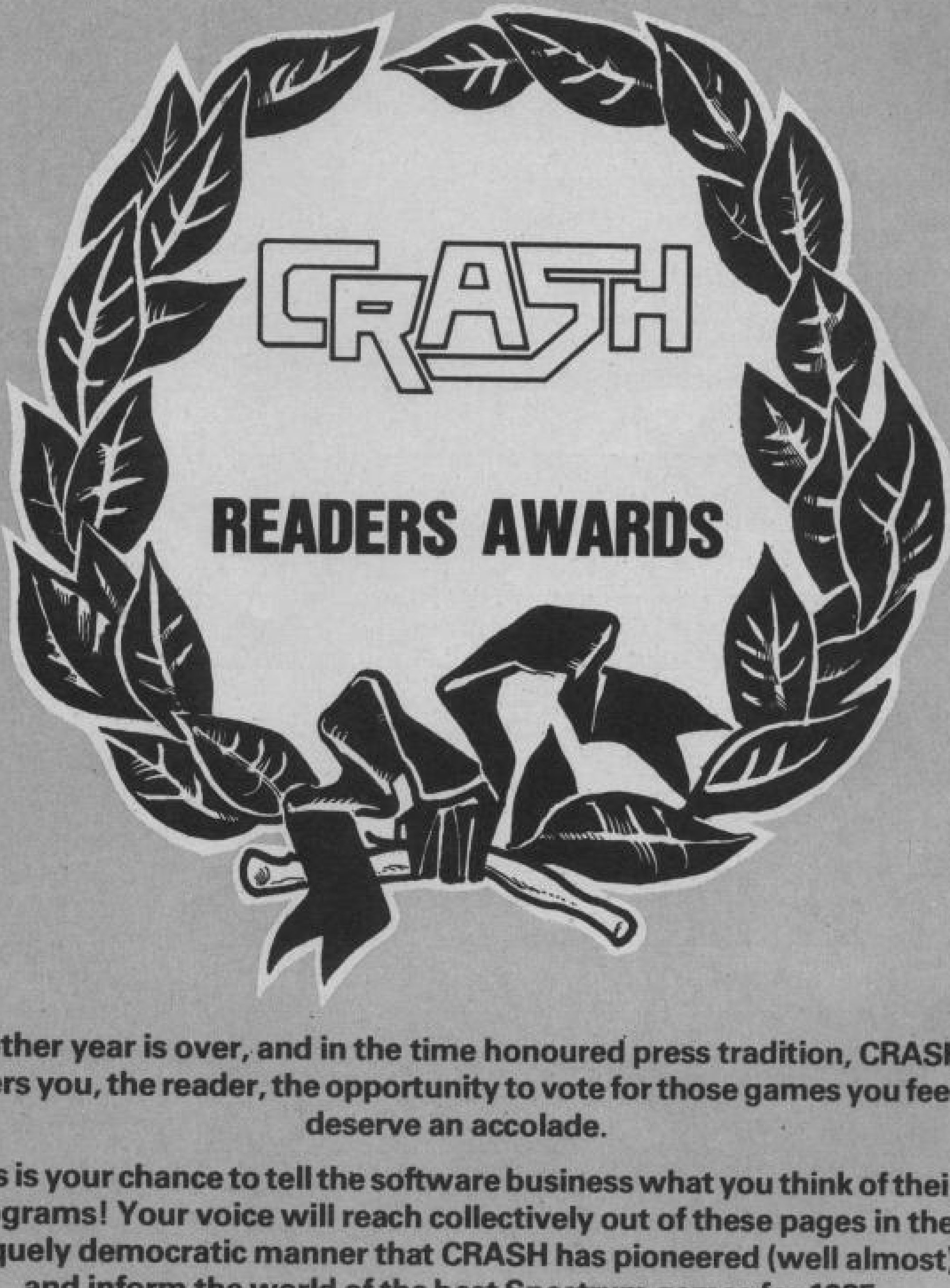
Arnhem Germans lost 77 units; British lost 9
Highway Encounter 33,120 screen 9
LOM Completed both ways
Doomdark's Revenge Completed
Death Star Interceptor 23,000
Deathchase 3D 132,951
Matchday Scotland 17 England 0
Spy Hunter 167,260 on expert
Night Shade 50,000
Cyclone 13,000
The Bulge Allied major victory
Decathlon L Jump 9m; Shot 12m; Discus 75.90m; Javelin 92m; 100m 9.96; 400m 36.4
John Bannerman

Decathlon 100m 8.64; L Jump 9.87m; Shot 32.41m; H Jump 2.46m; 400m 27.04s; **Day 2** 110m 9.48s; Vault 5.08m; Discus 75.90m; Javelin 132.68m; 1500m 241.64s Day 2 total 931,462
M Scott, Kingswood, Bristol.

Starstrike 2,306,210
Hunchback 1,090,230
Jetpac 1,050,105
Knight Lore Completed 84%
Underwurlde Completed 90%
Booty Completed gold key
Ghostbusters Completed $90,003
Exploding Fist 10th dan 900,010
Jet Set Willy Completed
Pyjamarama Completed 72%
Atic Atac Completed 90%
Shadowfire Completed
Kung Fu Black Belt 9th dan
Manic Miner Completed
Harrier Attack Completed
Mugsy 54%
Football Manager Division 1
Hobbit 20%
Airwolf Completed 2 scientists
Wheelie Level 3
Alchemist Completed
Starion Completed
River Raid 1,230,116
Urban Upstart Completed
Paul Hings, Anstey, Leicester



VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!



Another year is over, and in the time honoured press tradition, CRASH offers you, the reader, the opportunity to vote for those games you feel deserve an accolade.

This is your chance to tell the software business what you think of their programs! Your voice will reach collectively out of these pages in the uniquely democratic manner that CRASH has pioneered (well almost), and inform the world of the best Spectrum games for 1985.

What we have done is to think up 14 categories, and over the page there is a large form to remove from the magazine (or photocopy if you prefer). This should be filled in and sent back to us as fast as you can. Of course there's more to it than that! CRASH is known to be not only democratic but generous to a fault — so the first 15 forms drawn from the bag on the closing date will earn their senders a voucher for £15 worth of software as well as a CRASH T-shirt!

The results of the voting will be published in the March issue of CRASH and the highly valuable certificates of accolade will be awarded soon after to the winning companies.
Get to it!

VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!

BEST GAME OVERALL
Title & Software House

BEST PLATFORM GAME
Title & Software House

BEST SHOOT EM UP
Title & Software House

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

BEST TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

BEST GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE
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BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION
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BEST SPORTS SIMULATION
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BEST WARGAME
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BEST GRAPHICS
Title & Software House

BEST SOUND FX
Title & Software House

BEST MUSIC
Title & Software House

TACKIEST GAME OF THE YEAR
Title & Software House

For the most outstanding programming achievement of 1985

STATE OF THE ART AWARD
Title & Software House

Please cut out this page from the magazine and send it back to us as soon as possible. **Don't forget to write your name, address and T-shirt size (small, medium or large) on the form in capital letters!**

In each category enter the name of the program and the software house concerned for which you wish to vote. Please note: products must have a 1985 copyright to be elligible. The collated results will be presented as a winner with two runners-up.

There's no need to fill in every category if you cannot think of anything suitable, but obviously the more you fill in the better the end result will be.

Forms should be returned to **CRASH READERS AWARDS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than Monday January 20th, when the draw will be made.

Name ....

Address ....

....

.... Postcode ....

T-shirt size ....

BOUNCES THE SPORT OF THE FUTURE

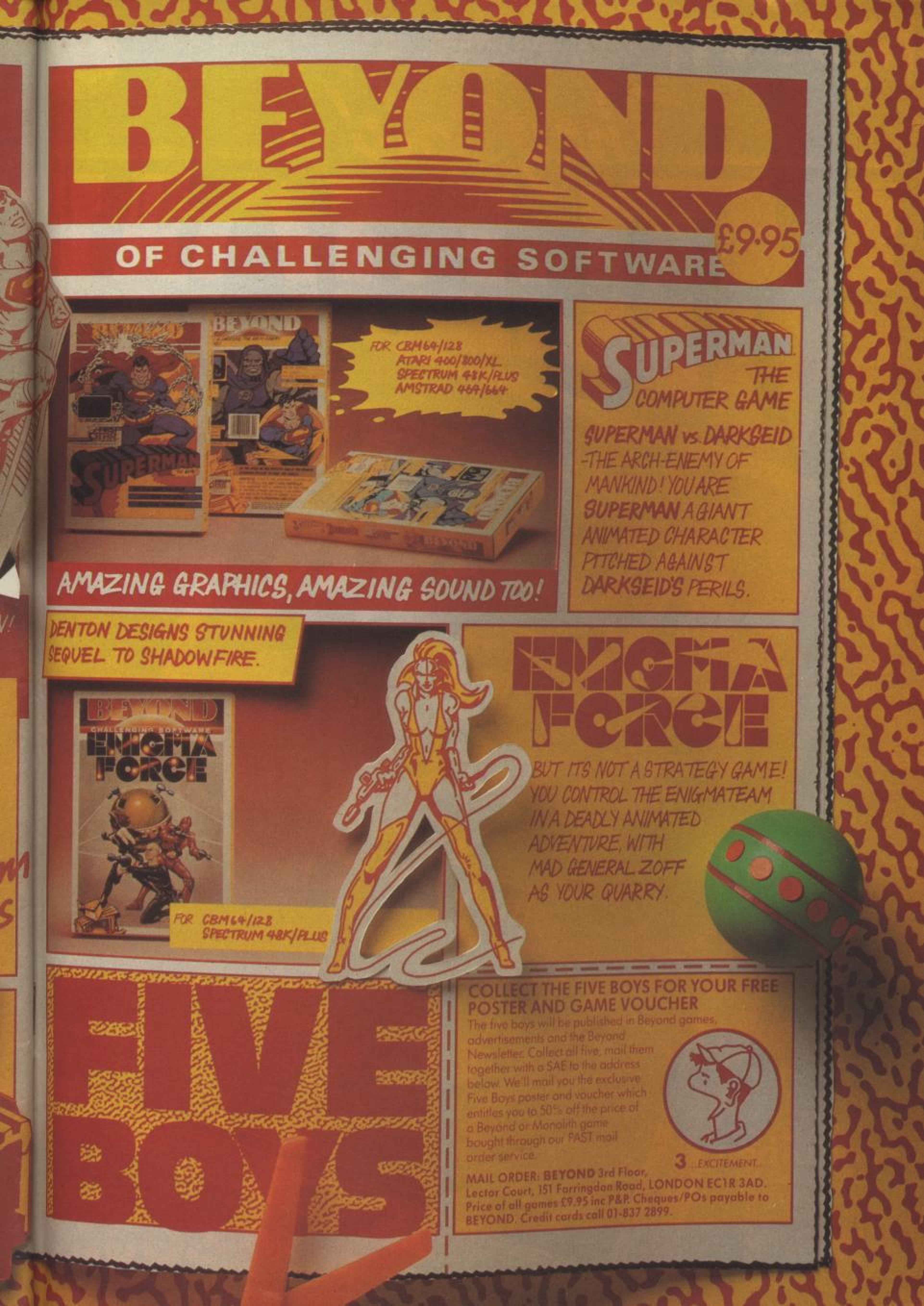
BOUNCES GET THE PICTURE QUAKE GET THE PICTURE

GET THE PICTURE QUAKE THE SLUGATHON SHOOT OUT

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FOR CBM64/128
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ENIGMA FORCE
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FOR CBM64/128
SPECTRUM 48K/PLUS
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TECH NICHE

THE EXPRESS GANG PART 4

In Which Franco Frey concludes his survey of fast storage media, that allow you to get more out of your Spectrum. Well, more out in a given period of time. And more in, too. That's what Fast Storage is all about really.

LAST IN THE SERIES of fast storage media is the **Timex** disk drive. Featuring its own Z80A processor with external ROM and RAM, the Timex drive treats the Spectrum as a terminal. By changing the interface unit, the system could be connected to any other type of computer — indeed work is in progress at Timex Towers on a Commodore 64 interface right now. Theoretically at least, this means that a change of computer needn't mean making your Timex drive redundant.

The Timex disk system has been designed so that it does not require a single byte of the Spectrum's own RAM memory, and as a result it simply can't interfere with any commercial software. Unfortunately, however, RAM 'photography', using a hardware interrupt switch (similar to the BETA PLUS system) is not catered for.
The Timex Operating System (TOS) is the only Spectrum based operating system to include a complete tree-structure directory facility similar to professional systems such as MS-DOS or C/PM. This enables the user to maintain a tidy household containing all the disk files. Other good features are the excellent random and sequential file handling, and the pair of serial communication ports (RS232C) which are fully software supported.

TIMEX DISK DRIVE

HARDWARE:
Hardware abounds with no less than four separately enclosed units. The three main units, consisting of the 3 inch disk drive, the controller and the power supply, are fitted in three identical enclosures. The small interface unit plugs into the expansion bus of the Spectrum. Connection to the controller is via a hefty coiled cable and D-plug. Up to four drives may be linked to the system, but drives 3 and 4 necessitate an extra power supply. The controller features two serial ports which require special cables with edge connector sockets. The controller also features a system reset button and power LED, while a reset switch on the interface provides a Spectrum only reset. The interface does not feature an expansion port and if the ZX printer or ALPHACOM 32 printer is to be connected, a T extension connector will be required.



SYSTEM DESCRIPTION:
Unlike all other disk units in this series, the Timex disk system is a complete computer with it's own Z80A processor. This system treats the Spectrum as a terminal only and the interface passes commands and data onto the controller. The Timex Operating System (TOS) is configured as an extended Sinclair BASIC and resides in a shadow ROM. It has 1 kbyte of external RAM at its disposal for storing the drive characteristics, buffers and variables. These must initially be booted up from any preformatted disk.

The BASIC Extension instructions can either be executed directly from the keyboard or from within the program like any other BASIC instruction. The TOS commands may also be accessed directly from machine code by selecting the external ROM with a jump to address 0008H. In the external ROM there is a routine to call routines in the BASIC ROM, so that all BASIC functions may be accessed at any time. Calling 0603H or 0604H reselects the BASIC ROM.

TOS supports a subdirectory 'tree-structure'. There is a root directory which may contain other directories. Directories can be nested and the specific route from the file to the current directory is called a pathname. Any Filename extensions such as for example .BAS and .COD may be used to separate the different file types, although only .DIR (for for directory names) and .SCP (for communication channel names) have a specific meaning to TOS.

FRANCO FREY'S "SORRY" SPOT Also Known As: ERRATA!

As is usual (and perhaps, inevitable) several errors have crept in during the Fast Storage Series. The worst of the lot was in last issue, with the statement that the OPUS drive has the same format as Amstrad and Tatung — which it doesn't. The timings given for the OPUS drive proved to be wrong: Cataloguing happens in a split second and loading a screen takes approx. 5 seconds not 4.

Dimitri Koveos from Abbeydale Design Ltd, designers of the K-DOS, has cleared up several errors in our Kempston drive review, notably to do with the speed of the drive. The review stated that the drive had a slow access time. As indicated in our comparison table, this is not so — in fact, owing to the clever coding, K-DOS is the fastest system for the Spectrum and apologies are deserved to both Kempston and Abbeydale Design. Sorry. Also, no mention was made of the CLEAR 0 function, which compresses BASIC programs to save memory.

Furthermore, Dimitri reckons the command structure is no more difficult and tedious than the microdrive/wafadrive commands — a point one can argue about ad infinitum.

Running the operating system outside BASIC, BETA PLUS can have very short and simple commands for regular file access and only runs into problems when disk access is required within BASIC, where PRINT USR statements are used for link up.

Further corrections should be sent to the department of errors, Crash towers ...

File names may contain 'masks' or 'jokers'. The plus sign can be used to replace all or several characters in a name field, while the question mark replaces one character only. File names with masks (templates) can be used with most instructions and provide access to a group or batch of files.

TOS supports random access and sequential files. A data file must be opened and a channel for input or output linked to it. INPUT* and PRINT* are the only instructions that allow access to a specific part of a file. When the OPEN #* instruction is executed, the file structure is defined. The file can either be a stream file with no record structure, where you can read or write a variable number of characters up to 256, or a record file with a fixed record length of a specified amount of characters. Stream files can only be read sequentially or in random fashion with an AT command.

TOS provides up to 16 channels. Channels 1 to 4 are fast (each have an dedicated 512 byte buffer) and 5 to 16 are slow (common 512 byte buffer).

The floppy disk controller is equipped with two RS232C serial communication ports (SCP's). These have to be set to the correct format and baud rate by configuring the two dedicated SCP files with a FORMAT* statement. The files may then be opened in a similar way to the stream or record files for sending or receiving data.

OPERATING SYSTEM:
TOS (Timex Operating System) configured as a BASIC Extension.

SYSTEM COMMANDS:
CAT* *displays the disk directory contents. The list displays the name, the file type (extension), the file size in bytes, the disk allocation (sectors occupied) and two columns indicating whether the file is write-protected (by means of the TOS software facility, not the write-protect tab). The only two extensions that have special meaning for TOS are .DIR, indicating a subdirectory and .SCP a communication channel.*
FORMAT* "drivename" TO "diskname" *formats a disk in the requested drive. TOS is copied onto each disk (requiring 16K) for booting up. The directory requires 4K. TOS requests confirmation before proceeding with the formatting.*
SAVE* pathname LOAD OPTIONS *saves a file to disk. The pathname consists of the subdirectory (or subdirectories) and a filename. The LOAD OPTION may be LINE number for BASIC autorun, SCREEN for a screen file, CODE start, length for a machine code file and DATA arrayname () for a numeric or string array. If an existing file is specified, TOS displays a warning with a prompt to overwrite the existing file (unless the save syntax includes an overwrite enable). If the program saved is called "START" with a linenumber for autorun, TOS will autoboot from a reset if the disk is in drive A.*
LOAD* pathname LOAD OPTION *loads a file from disk.*
MERGE* pathname *merges a BASIC file from disk with the existing program and variables in the Spectrum memory.*
DIM* pathname *creates a 0 size file or an empty directory. The use of the path means that files can be created outside the current directory. For a directory, a filename with a .DIR extension must be used.*
GOTO* pathname *or* GOTO* "drivename" d *changes the current directory/disk. Special pathnames exist for moving up or down the directory hierarchy.*
GOTO* "↑↑ ... " *moves up one or more nested directories and* GOTO* ":" *goes to the Root directory.*
LIST* *displays the current directory location (pathname of source directory, its level and the drive). TOS allows the change of the current directory to another drive without knowing the disk name with a* GOTO* "drive name" d.
GO SUB* (pathname) *or* GO SUB* "drive name" d *changes the current directory/drive and stores the return directory/drive on a directory/drive stack ready to be recalled with a* DRAW* *command. This is very useful for applications requesting a change of directory/disk to perform a task with subsequent return (using* DRAW*) *to the source directory/disk. TOS allows up to 8 levels of nesting.*
DRAW* *pops the source directory/disk. Used in conjunction with the* GO SUB* *command.*
ATTR* pathname P, U, I or V *write/erase protects, unprotects, hides (I) or unveils (V) files or directories. The pathname can be a template, so more than one file can be affected. A Format* instruction can still destroy a protected disk.*
MOVE* source-pathname TO destination-pathname *copies a file or SCP to another file or SCP. The source is not destroyed or modified.*
ERASE* pathname (N) *erases files. TOS will ask for confirmation. The instruction will generate an error report if the file is write protected or belongs to a tab-protected disk.*
LET* old pathname TO new pathname *renames a file, directory or SCP.*
FORMAT* SCP-pathname *changes the configuration of the SCP. The parameters are text or bytes, autolinefeed on or off, software protocol, input with wait, baud rate, parity, and number of stop-bits and databits.*
OPEN #* expression 1; pathname, mode (expression 2) *opens a file or SCP and associates a channel with it for access through* PRINT* *and* INPUT* *statements.*

ROUNDING OFF THE SERIES

A table of all the tested drives concludes the series on fast storag media, and provides a basis for direct comparison of all the differen systems available to the Spectrum owner. The various feature listed enable any future disk or cartridge drive owner to make up hi or her mind as to which drive is particularly suited for the require application.

Before delving into the comparison chart, it would be wise t clearly define what the system is going to be used for. At present i would appear that there is a total lack of application programs t support the disk based systems, and the drives may be regarded a purely tools for BASIC and machine code programmers. Disk driv producers should be made aware of the fact that a very large prop ortion of Spectrum owners are not dedicated programmers, but ar more avid consumers of commercially available software, be games software or wordprocessing and database packages.

Some effort on the part of drive manufacturers expended in prov iding application programs for their system could result in an oper ing up of what is at the moment still a fringe market ...

PRINT* # n; STR ; (;AT P) *writes characters or records to a file or SCP via a channel. Maximum record number is 65535.*
INPUT*# n; VAR (;AT P) *reads a character or record from a file or SCP via a channel.*
CLOSE#* *expression closes the open file linked to the channel number given by the expression.*
LIST* # (channel number) *lists information of all or specified channel numbers. The information includes the channel number, the channel type (fast or slow), mode (input, output, random, append), type (record or stream), current record (file pointer position), size (file size in bytes) and number of free channels, or if it's an SCP: mode, type, record length (1 if stream), baud rate (50 to 19200), data type (text or bytes), autolinefeed, XON or XOFF and number of free channels.*

ERROR REPORTS:
46 error reports, extensive and detailed.

EXTRA FACILITIES:
Two serial communication ports (SCP'S), baud rate adjustable from 50 to 19200 baud. Utility program provided on disk for operation of LPRINT and LLIST commands through serial port A.

MANUAL:
Excellent manual providing startup and introduction to new disk drive users followed by detailed description of TOS system and commands, directories and pathnames, random and sequential file handling and serial ports application with example programs. Appendix with TOS command summary, error reports, description of utility programs and RS232C connection details. Guidance is provided for the programmer wishing to operate from machine code (detailed list of TOS routines together with their call addresses) and for error trapping control.

APPLICATION PROGRAMS:
None, but selection of utility programs on disk including BACKUP (copies an entire disk), LOSYS (updates the TOS on existing disks without losing any data on the disk), DUMP (displays selected file on screen in hexadecimal and ASCII notation) and LPRINT (provides LPRINT and LLIST commands for 80 column printers connected to the serial port A).

CRITICISM:
No Centronics parallel port for low-cost 80 column printers available.
Extensive amount of hardware cluttering the desk.

COMMENTS:
Excellent TOS with directory filing structure, random and sequential data file handling and full SCP software support.

TOS operates as BASIC extension with very short and uncomplicated commands (unlike microdrive commands) and easy access from machine code is possible through well documented call addresses.

TOS does not use a single byte of the Spectrum RAM.

MEDIA:
3.0 inch hard cased disks in double density format. Price of media starting from £2.70.

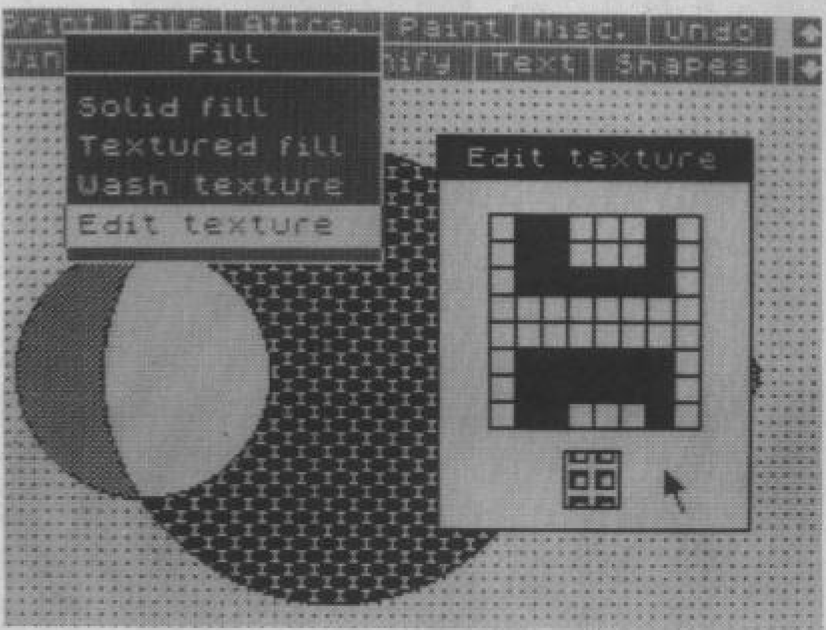
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION:
Number of drives supported per system: 4
Storage capacity: 160K per side
Sector size: 1024 bytes

TIMING:
Formatting: approx. 31sec
Cataloguing: approx. 3.5sec
Loading a screen: approx. 5.5sec

	HARDWARE:	OPERATING SYSTEM:	SPEED:	MEDIA:	APPLICATION PROGRAMS:	SPECIAL FEATURES:	CRITICISM:	PRICE:
MICRODRIVE & INTERFACE 1	ZX Interface 1 stacks under the Spectrum and includes the Microdrive interface, RS232C serial interface, local area network and expansion port. Microdrive plugs in via short flat cable and has extension connector for further drives.	Extended BASIC residing in shadow ROM, which gives access to the drive and provides software support for the serial interface and local area network.	Average access time with long search periods	Microdrive cartridges with over 85K formatted capacity	Although the support has not reached the expected level, it is still the most widely supported fast storage media tested	- Software supported serial interface - Local area network links up to 64 stations for multiplayer games or school environments - Still the cheapest fast storage device	- disappointingly slow performance for a fast storage device - Some users complain of the short cartridge life due to tape roller pinching	£99.90 inc.
TRITON QD	Large cream coloured 2.8 inch disk drive connected to black Spectrum interface unit with expansion port.	Extended BASIC residing in shadow ROM	Fast Access (never longer than 8 sec)	Unusual 2.8 inch hardcased disk with up to 100kbytes capacity (both sides)	No drive specific programs available yet, but utility included for transferring files from tape to disk	- Fast formatting - probably more reliable media and faster than Microdrive and wafadrive	- rare disk format may cause supply problems	£119.00 inc.
BETA PLUS	Interface for Shugart compatible drives in single and double density format. Magic button for storing complete RAM memory to disk. Interface includes expansion port	TR DOS V4 commands are accessed in operating system environment but can be called from BASIC with PRINT USR and REM statements. DOS resides in ROM and caters for 35, 40 and 80 track drives	Fast access times	depends on drives installed, 3 inch, 3.5 inch and 5.25 single and double density up to 640K capacity	Very little support from software houses. Magic Button provides back up facilities for games and utilities	- Excellent RAM image saver - Sequential and random datafile access - Short commands in DOS environment - Utility disk for tape copying and filing work - requires only the printer buffer area of the Spectrum RAM	- needs more support from software houses	£109.25 inc. plus £4 P&P
ROTRONICS WAFADRIVE	Complete system including two stringy floppy drives and serial and parallel ports	Extended BASIC residing in shadow ROM with commands similar to ZX interface 1	Variably slow depending on tape length of cartridge. Compares to Microdrive spec.		Spectral Writer by Softek included in package. Small library of games and utilities available.	- Software supported Centronics and serial interface - Standard unit includes two drives - Wafadrive Operating System not apparent until initialised - Wildcard facility	- Wafadrive is faster than cassette, but a lot slower than floppy disk media - Fairly expensive media - Requires more support from software houses	£129.95 inc.
OPUS DISCOVERY 1	Complete disk drive system with 3.5 inch drive, Kempston joystick interface, Centronics parallel port, mono video output and expansion port	Extended BASIC. Syntax compatible with Microdrive commands. Supports data storage with serial and random access files. Fast RAM disk operation for fast file handling	Fast access time	3.5 inch singlesided single density providing 180K capacity	Games, word-processing and database packages available in OPUS format	- Sequential and random access files - RAM disk option - Autoboot facility - Software supported Centronics interface - Several add-ons integrated in one unit including joystick interface and monochrome video output - can be expanded to twin drive unit with integral second disk	Requires more support from software houses	£199.95 inc. VAT File CG91B
KEMPSTON	Interface for Shugart compatible double density drives. System reset switch	ROM based Kempston Operating System developed by the same company as Watford Micro's SP-DOS (Abbeydale Design Ltd). K-DOS is accessible through BASIC using PRINT 4: *command:* PRINT *variables* statements. Provision for 35, 40 and 80 track formatting	Very fast access times due to careful machine coding and variable track access delays to accommodate the faster drives. K-DOS can access a complete track in one revolution (no skewing) averaging 15Kbytes/sec. Proves to be the fastest DOS tested	Depends on the drives installed, 3 inch, 3.5 inch and 5.25 double density with up to 820K formatted capacity	Tasword 2, Omnicalc 2, Masterfile, OCP editor/assembler, OCP address/stock/finance manager, Word Manager, Extended Art Studio can be configured to run with K-DOS	- BASIC overlay facility - Autoboot option - BASIC compression routine - Error trapping function (ON ERROR GOTO...) - Wildcard facility on CAT, ERASE and MOVE for batch file handling - Selectable track access timing	- No expansion port - No random record file access	£85 inc. VAT
TIMEX	Four units incorporating the Spectrum interface, controller, power supply and 3.0 inch disk drive. The controller is an independent Z80A processor system with disk interface and two serial ports.	Timex Operating System configured as an extended Sinclair BASIC, residing in ROM. Supports drive functions and the two serial communication ports.	Fast access times	3.0 inch hardcased with 320K formatted capacity per disk (2 sides).	Very few, very little support from software houses.	- Efficient command structure within BASIC - Excellent directory structure facility - Sequential and random access of datafiles - Doesn't require a single byte of the Spectrum RAM	- Extensive amount of hardware	approx. £260

INSIDE THE ART STUDIO

After much eager waiting, ART STUDIO has arrived at CRASH Towers. Franco Frey got his hands on it first, and as a result, was told to write the review. Here it is . . .



Having ART STUDIO personally demonstrated by Supremo Without Portfolio, Bruce Everiss, at the last PCW show, everybody at CRASH towers was eagerly awaiting the review copy from OCP. Little was it known that the final copy was to come from RAINBIRD SOFTWARE, a new subsidiary of British Telecom and part of the New Information Services, who have now taken over the marketing of the product. The packaging has not been finalised, so the comments are directed entirely to the program content, which is after all of more importance . . .

ART STUDIO follows the popular trend, commercially introduced by APPLE, of basing the program on a windows — icons — mouse — pointing-device concept. The main aim behind this concept is to provide a program which is easily operated by the first time user with all relevant information on the screen and no complicated keyboard sequences needed to access commands. Commands are issued by simply pointing at options contained in screen menus. The pointing device, the icon, indicates by its shape the current instrument or mode.

A menu bar at the top of the screen contains the major headings. Pointing at any of these causes a sub-menu to be pulled down (a window is overlayed). This contains a number of options, which may lead to further sub-menus, or cause certain commands to be executed. An option is chosen by moving the cursor down the list and the options which highlight may be accessed and chosen by pressing the select button ('clicking' an option). If the option is a command, the pulldown menu disappears and the arrow cursor changes into an icon indicating the present status. Whenever it is moved back into the heading area, the cursor reverts back to an arrow. To remove a menu pulled down by mistake, the cursor is moved outside the submenu box and the select switch pressed.

Some menu options are neither commands nor submenus, but are flags or switches. These can be toggled on or off to modify the behaviour of other options. The on state is represented by a tick, the off state by a cross.

The full Spectrum screen occupies 24 lines, but the menu bar occupies 3 lines. Two boxes are provided in the menu bar containing arrows, which if accessed by the cursor, will scroll the screen up or down by up to three lines to make the hidden portion of the screen visible.

ART STUDIO comes supplied as a master tape configured to produce a 'personalised' copy of ART STUDIO, which allows you to produce a customised version ready to run under your particular hardware environment. To install ART STUDIO, the master copy is loaded and run. Following prompts, you enter all the required hardware data, and the installing program then saves the 'personalised' copy of ART STUDIO. The data to be supplied for configuring defines the input device, the printer interface and printer details regarding graphics printing mode. The flexibility of ART STUDIO allows any dot matrix printer to be accommodated and if the user should not have any of the listed Centronics devices, details are given in the concise manual on the three required machine code routines to control the particular interface.

Despite the fact that ART STUDIO is configured to be run by first time users without the need to delve into long-winded manuals, RAINBIRD provide an excellent and easily digestible reference work, which at the time of the review is still in draft form.

RAINBIRD make available to microdrive and Kempston interface owners an extended OCP ART STUDIO at £24.95 (mail order only), which includes Microdrive and Kempston Operating Systems, a screen compression facility and four extra text fonts. Owing to the fact that some lesser-used functions are stored on cartridge or disk as 'Overlays', the program has the ability to maintain a RAM based catalogue, which is displayed within the menu environment of EXTENDED ART STUDIO and includes an extra shape, *Arc*, which is a fractional part of a circle defined by three points. EXTENDED ART STUDIO is also available as an upgrade for £12 inc. P&P by mail order.

ART STUDIO is an excellent state-of-the-art graphics package and must be the best available for Spectrum owners. Despite the fact that the very structure of the program is based on a mouse operated system, the intelligent cursor, which speeds up the longer it is moved in the same direction, together with a sensitive microswitch joystick such as the Flightlink or Voltmace provide an excellent low cost replacement for this expensive controlling device.

The only criticism that could be found, if one tended to be finnicky, is that the spray patterns should also have been user-definable, especially as the existing patterns are very inked and don't allow for a fine regulation. At £14.95 ART STUDIO is an excellent buy. For the more pecunious, the pack includes a mouse offer from OCP and a hard copy offer from DIMENSION, who will immortalise your favourite screen creations on a £16,000 ink-jet printer: A4 size at £4.95 and DELUXE (320mm x 250mm) card mounted and gloss laminated at £7.95.

Product: **ART STUDIO**
Producer: **Rainbird Software**
Programmer: **James Hutchby**

EXTENDED ART STUDIO available by mail order from:
Rainbird Software
New Information Services
Wellington House
Upper St.Martins Lane
London WC2H 9DL

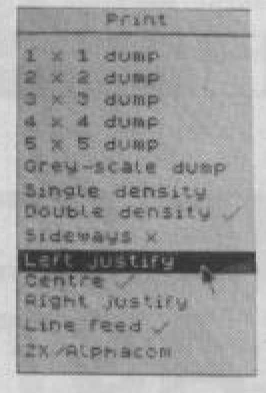
HARD COPIES available from:
Dimension Graphics Ltd.
PO BOX 444
Buckingham MK18 5LN

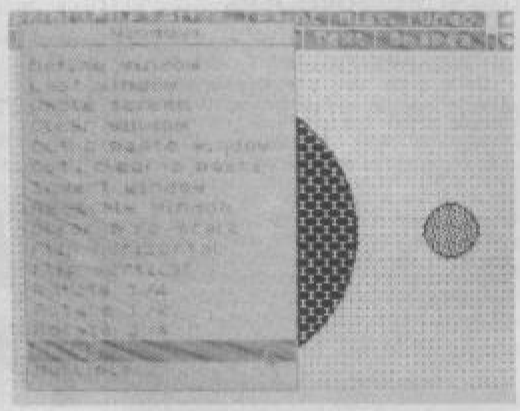
FEATURES

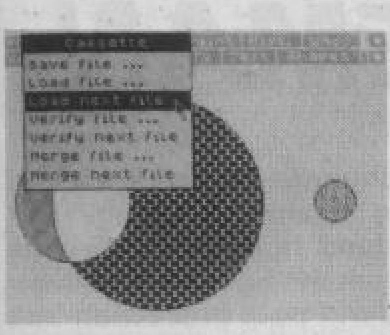
- Windows — icons — pull-down menus — pointing devices
- All information on screen
- Works with keyboard and Kempston, cursor, Interface 2 joysticks
- AMX and Kempston Mouse option
- Dot matrix printer dumps in five sizes and grey-scale
- Supports 17 Centronics and RS232C interfaces
- Save and load pictures to cassette
- Full control over attributes
- 16 pens, 8 random sprays, 16 user-definable brushes
- Attribute grids
- Undo facility
- Windows can be cleared, inverted, cut & pasted, enlarged, reduced, squashed, stretched, flipped and rotated
- Solid fill
- Textured fill — 32 user-definable patterns include stipples, hatches, bricks, roof tiles etc.
- Wash texture facility
- 3 levels of magnification with pixel edit, pan and zoom
- Text — 9 character sizes, 2 directions, sideways, bold
- Font editor — clear, invert, flip, rotate characters or whole font, copy ROM, capture font from window
- Save and load fonts to cassette
- Lines, rectangles, triangles, circles and rays
- Snap and elastic shapes

PRINT

PRINT provides facilities for hardcopy on a dot matrix printer. Five sizes dictated by number of dots on paper to one dot or pixel on screen. Height to width scale depends on resolution of printer selected, ie number of dots per inch on a line to line spacing pitch. Two resolutions can be accessed within ART STUDIO, single density and double density. No colour information is used unless grey scale dump is used. Here the different colours are represented with stipples of varying density. Grey scale dumps are always in a 3 x 3 size. The picture can be printed sideways, allowing bigger dumps, or from top to bottom, and can be situated left, right or in the centre. If an 80 column printer isn't available, the screen can be dumped to the ZX or ALPHACOM 32-column printer.







FILE

FILE features all the commands for saving, loading and verifying screen files to and from tape. The files must be either SCREEN files or CODE files not longer than six and three quarter kilobytes. Saving will prompt for a file name. For loading, verifying and merging a file name can be specified or ART STUDIO can be instructed to load, verify or merge the next file on tape. A tape file can be merged with a current screen file either on an OR basis (if the OVER switch is off) or on an XOR basis (if the OVER switch is on).

MAGNIFY

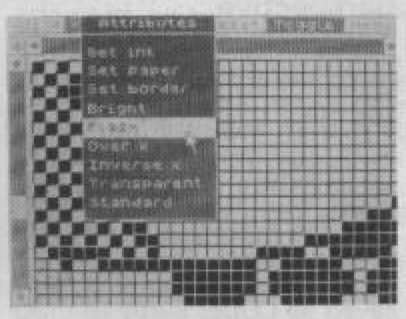
Three levels of magnification are available with facilities to edit pixels, pan and zoom the current screen part. Selecting a magnification converts the arrow cursor into a magnifying glass which can be positioned over the required screen area. Three modes of editing are provided under magnification, SET, RESET and TOGGLE. The ATTRIBUTE menu is available directly from the menu bar. The area magnified can be scrolled over the entire screen area by clicking the boxes with arrows in them, or homed by clicking the box containing the linked squares. White bars between the pairs of arrow boxes indicate the relative position of the magnifying window to the whole screen. The magnification can be changed at any time by clicking the appropriate magnification box. A grid is available in the x8 magnification mode with one square in the grid representing one pixel on the screen. This grid can be switched on or off from the initial Magnify menu.

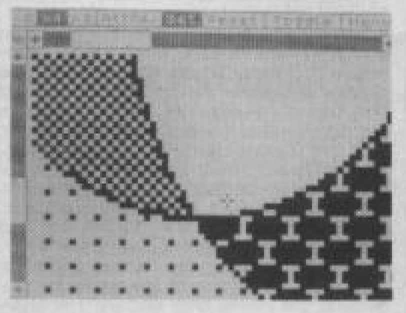
WINDOWS

WINDOWS sets up a rectangular section of the screen marked by a dotted outline, upon which certain functions can be performed.

CUT & PASTE copies the window to another area of the screen by displaying a duplicate dotted outline which can be moved around and set. Similarly CUT, CLEAR & PASTE copies the window but clears the source window. Multiple copies of a window can be made with the MULTIPLE switch on. MERGE combines the copied window with the existing screen contents on an OR or XOR basis depending on the state of the OVER switch.

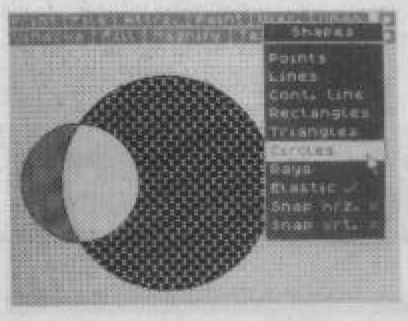
A window can be enlarged, reduced, squashed or stretched by using the RESCALE option, which works similarly to the normal window copy command, but allows the destination window to be redefined in size. This function is extremely useful and provides a replacement for the missing elipse function in SHAPES. Windows can be inverted, flipped, mirrored and rotated or just simply cleared.





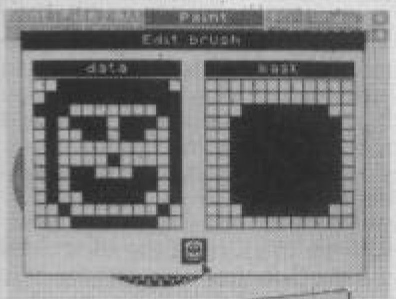
ATTRIBUTES

ATTRIBUTES deals with the colour control. The attributes once set apply to all painting and drawing that is done via shapes, pens, brushes, fills and text. All ink and paper colours may be set including transparent. OVER and INVERSE can be toggled on or off, transparent sets all attributes to transparent and STANDARD sets the attributes back to their default values.



SHAPES

SHAPES provides up to seven different drawing routines, namely single point, lines, a continuous line, rectangles, triangles, circles and rays. All shapes are drawn (in current ink and paper colours) by moving the cursor about the screen and pressing select to define the vertices. Shapes can be drawn elastically by setting the corresponding switch. The shape can be expanded or contracted on screen until it is the right size and then fixed with the select switch. Again similar to text, the vertices of shapes can be snapped in two directions to come within attribute boundaries.



PAINT

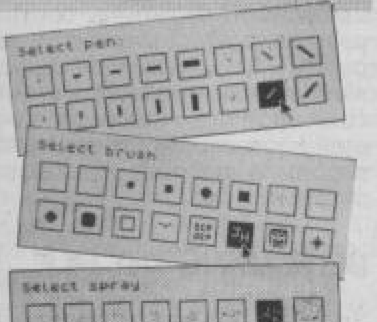
PAINT provides access to the various drawing tools.

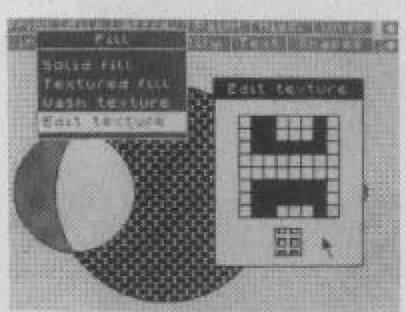
Selecting PEN displays the sixteen pens available. The pen sets pixels by pressing select or if the INVERSE switch is on, resets pixels (erasing function).

8 SPRAY CANS of varying diameters spray a random pattern of dots on the screen. If the spray can is held in place, the dots build up to a solid disc.

16 BRUSHES are available of various sizes and designs and each brush has an associated mask with it. When a brush is used to paint on the screen, first the pixels corresponding to the mask are reset, then the pixels corresponding to the brush itself are set. The first brush in the menu is a null brush and can be used to colour an existing picture with new attribute settings without upsetting the screen pixels.

Each of the 16 brushes can be edited. To edit a particular brush, it must be made the current brush. The newly edited brush can be used by simply pointing the cursor at it's normal size image in the BRUSH EDIT window and pressing select.



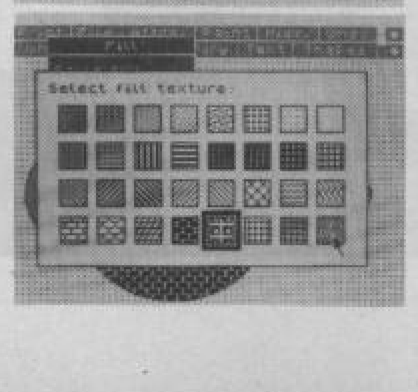


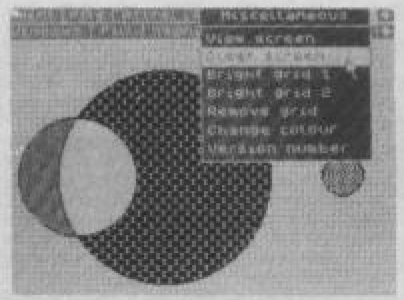
FILL

Apart from the usual solid fill, ART STUDIO provides a TEXTURED FILL which displays a menu containing the 32 textures available, from which a choice has to be made. All fills are done in the current attribute settings (INVERSE and OVER does not apply) and can be aborted with CAPS SHIFT and SPACE. The texture at the end of the first row is a null texture and is useful for setting the attributes within a section of the screen without altering any pixel states.

WASH TEXTURE maps a chosen texture onto any pixels on the screen that have been changed by a previous operation. This provides the facility of texturing outlines or even text.

Each of the 32 textures can be edited by making it the current texture and calling the EDIT TEXTURE window. The new texture can be used by clicking its normal sized image.





TEXT

TEXT can be printed in two directions, left to right and top to bottom, in normal or sideways orientation. Three character widths and three character heights provide up to nine different sizes. A bold switch is provided which prints characters twice with a one-pixel shift. All characters are printed in the current ink and paper settings (Inverse and Over apply), and provision is made to SNAP characters into attribute squares in both directions, horizontal and vertical, so that they occupy an exact amount of attribute characters.

The FONT EDITOR enables the editing of character sets (fonts). There are 96 characters in a font. Whole new fonts can be created and stored on cassette, and loaded into memory as required. The 96 characters are displayed at the bottom of the screen, with the current character marked in vertical brackets. The current character and the characters immediately to its left and right are shown in enlarged form above the font. Pointing to any character in the font and pressing select makes it the current character. Alternatively, the current character can be scrolled through the entire font by clicking the boxes with arrows. The character may then be edited by toggling the pixels on or off.

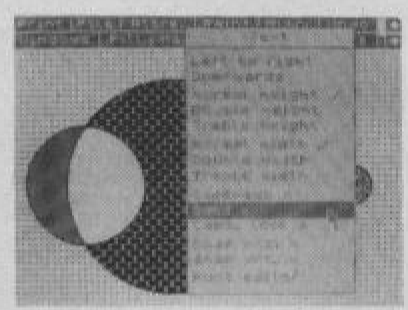
Special operations can be performed by pulling down the CHARACTER box. This includes clear, invert, flip horizontal, flip vertical, rotate, scroll right and scroll down. The same set of operations can be performed upon the font as a whole by pulling down the FONT menu. The character set contained in the Spectrum's ROM can be loaded into ART STUDIO's font.

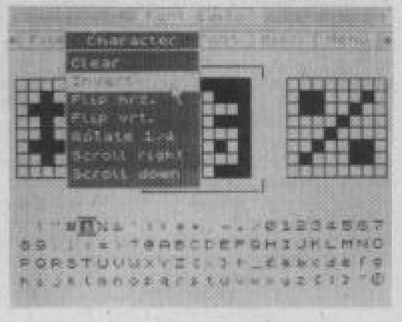
CAPTURE FONT copies blocks of pixels from a defined window on the screen in the font and can easily be used to create user defined graphics. Fonts can be saved and loaded from cassette. Character sets created with ART STUDIO can be used in the user's own program with a simple BASIC routine.

MISCELLANEOUS

VIEW SCREEN removes the menu bar to display the entire screen.

Both grids use alternate bright and normal squares and can be used to position details within the attribute grid to cause minimum clash of colours. CHANGE COLOUR works in conjunction with a defined WINDOW and changes one colour into another as specified in the ATTRIBUTE menu. Paper is the source colour and ink is defined as the destination colour. The option then converts all occurrences of the source colour to the destination colour.





THE PLASTIC POLICEMAN

Just about every known technique has been used to protect Spectrum software against copying. This month Tech Tips looks at (and hopefully), through Lenslok, **the latest trick to reach the Spectrum marketplace. But first, Simon Goodwin puts protection into perspective . . .**

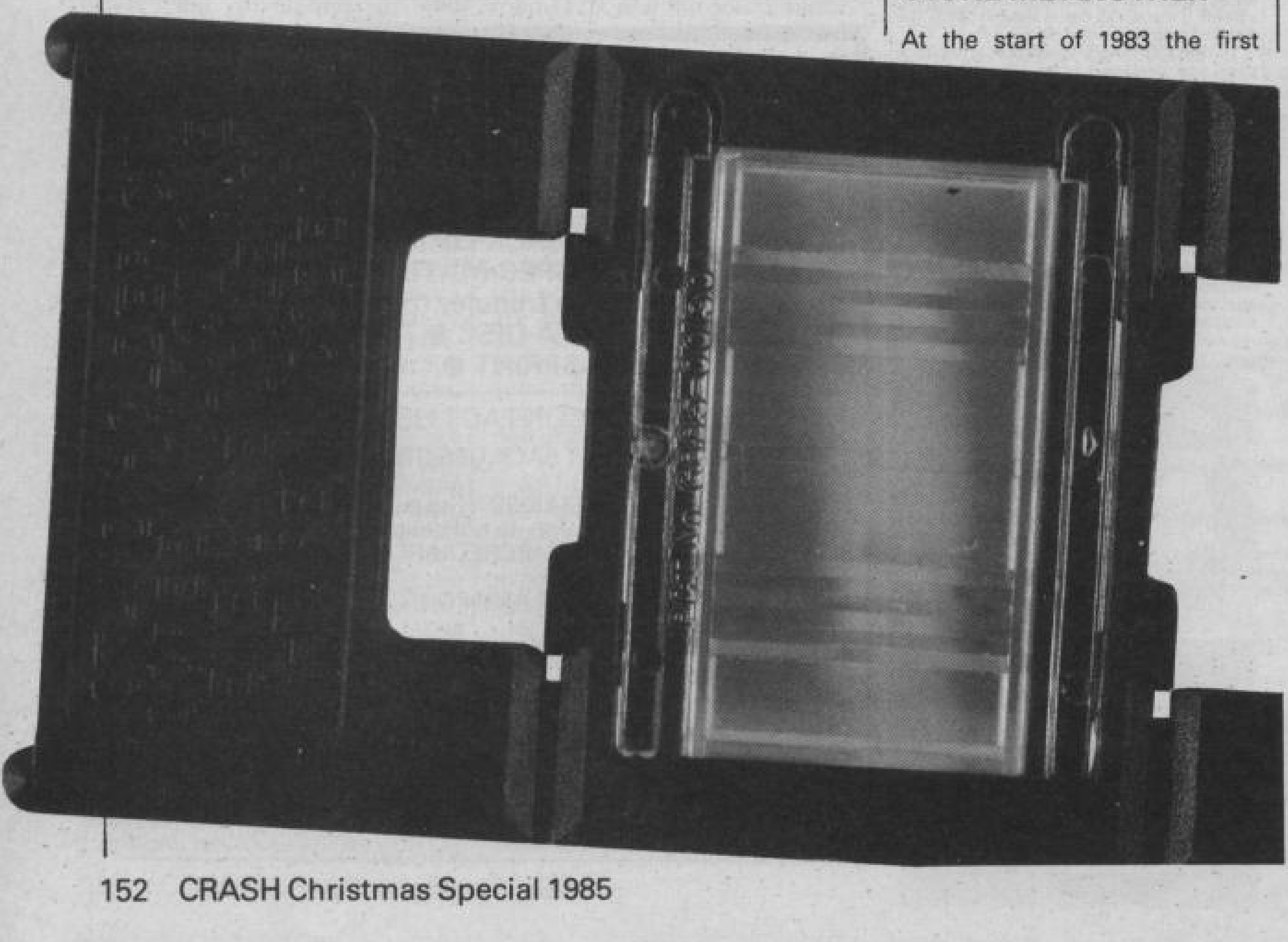
Spectrum software has always been protected to try to stop illegal copying. The aim is to make the code run straight away, so that copiers can't save after loading.

Many early programs were saved as CODE, partly to make them hard to copy with a normal SAVE command, and partly to give the impression that the program was written in machine code when in fact it was probably written in BASIC.

CLONE ME ANOTHER

At the start of 1983 the first 'clone' programs became available — programs to read any tape into memory and dump all of the data back onto cassette. These programs hit the software producers hard — a cloned copy was as good as the original, having come directly from the computer. Clones could be used to make any number of further copies, whereas tape-to-tape copies were inferior, and could only go through two or three generations before the hiss and distortion added at each step made further copying impossible.

The first response was to increase the size of the files to fill all the Spectrum's memory. This defeated the simple copying programs, which were 'crowded out' of RAM, but it made loading slow and created technical difficulties for the supplier. The pirates soon caught up and wrote programs capable of copying even a 48K file.



BEHEADING THE FILE

Software houses retaliated by re-defining the way in which programs were stored on tape. Spectrum files are written in two parts: a fixed size 'header', containing the file name and other details like its size; and a second part containing the data itself. Clone programs use the information in the header to work out where to store the rest of the file. This approach is foiled by the 'headerless file' — a short program is used to load a file with no identifying header. Without the header a simple clone program can't copy the rest of the file.

Another approach was to encode 'extra' information on the tape. One simple trick was to record a brief period of silence

onto the tape, between one file and the next — this quiet moment on the tape can be detected by simple software to read the cassette port. Most clone programs ignore gaps and pack files together on tape. Illegal copies can be detected because they are missing.

One Dk'tronics program used a short 'tune' at the end of the tape, immediately after the program. The sequence of notes was ignored by copiers, since it did not form part of the file, but the program checked for it and crashed (pretending there had been a loading error), if the notes were not present. The whole tune lasted for a fraction of a second, so it was almost impossible to detect the notes by listening to the tape.

ROM WAY

These tricks worked, in the sense that they put off the majority of casual copiers, but there was a constant battle between the authors of protection routines and clone programs — in some cases these were the same people!

The root of the problem was the ease with which cassettes could be copied, and Sinclair responded by borrowing an idea from Atari. That US firm was the first outfit to publish computer games in chip form — on plug-in cartridges. Sinclair produced the Interface 2, an adapter to allow the Spectrum to accept cartridges.

This idea failed, for a host of reasons. Unlike the Atari, the Spectrum already had a well established, reliable and fast cassette interface. Interface 2 was expensive; it included a pair of joystick ports, but these were not compatible with many games.

The cartridges themselves cost more to produce than tapes. They took a long time to manufacture and were limited to a 16K capacity, regardless of the memory of the computer. Programs were becoming more and more sophisticated — few software houses were willing to shoe-horn their next mega-game into 16K.

A few games were converted for the format, but nothing new was launched on cartridge, again denying users any reason to buy the ROM interface. MikroGen have recently relaunched the idea at a more reasonable price, but it seems unlikely that Spectrum ROM games will ever take over from cassettes — the performance improvement is too marginal.

THE COMING OF COLOUR

Meanwhile, trick tape schemes became more and more devious, and increasingly irritating for the producers as well as the would-be copiers. Then **Software Projects** came out with *Jet Set Willy*, a game that used a quite different system of protection.

The *JSW* tape is quite easy to copy, but there's a colour-coded table printed in the cassette inlay. When the program is loaded it displays a row of randomly coloured blobs — these have to be matched up with the table, and appropriate keys must to be pressed before the game starts.

The system has several snags — it is irritating for legitimate owners of the game, who have to go through the same ritual every time they want to load their copy. It is also a major obstacle for those with poor eyesight or grotty TV's. And the colour-coded chart turned out to be quite easy to copy — once the colours have been written as letters it takes less than 10 minutes to copy the whole chart, and the job can be done several times over in the course of a boring lesson!

HYPERLOADS

So software houses went back to tinkering with their tape recorders. The next step was to completely change the way in which programs are recorded, by re-defining the tones used to represent each bit of information on the tape. This approach allows programs to be loaded more quickly, since the tones can be more densely packed onto the tape.

Thus the first of the so-called 'Hyper-loaders' came into being. They have a big weakness. They are often unreliable — the densely-packed tape is more prone to the effects of duplication faults, and some early systems used high-pitched tones which could not be reliably reproduced by cheap tape players.

Many software producers deliberately made their systems intolerant of uneven levels or background noise, in the hope of detecting tape-to-tape copies. This lead to loading problems for legitimate users of original tapes, and Hyperloads gained a bad name, both with retailers and customers.

ENTER THE LENS

At this point software producers were pretty stumped. They'd fiddled as much as possible with the two component parts of a software package — the tape and the documentation — but they still couldn't stop photocopiers and tape-to-tape copying. They'd tried to by-pass the cassette altogether, but ROM cartridges had failed because they were too expensive and required special equipment (Interface 2).

What they needed was something cheap, small (so that it would fit into a cassette box) and hard to copy. Unlike Sinclair ROMs, it must work with the standard equipment possessed by every Spectrum user. Electronics was out — tape scramblers, 'dongles', ROMs and so forth are expensive and hard to manufacture in bulk. The solution was to use the only part of the system that had not yet been harnessed against illegal copying — the TV set.

TV's and micros both work by displaying a pattern of small dots which look like pictures, or text, when viewed from a distance. The first diagram shows the way a letter A might be represented as a pattern of dots.

A DISTORTED VIEW

Wedge-shaped transparent plastic prisms can be used to deflect light. Take the pattern of dots in the figure A, in diagram one. If you look at a same pattern through a group of narrow prisms, the columns can be swapped around — as light passes through the arrangement of prisms, the order of columns can be scrambled, so that they don't form a pattern representing a recognisable character. ▶

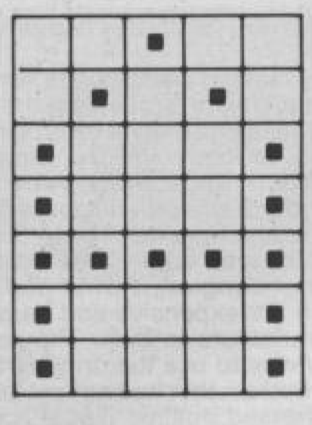


Diagram One

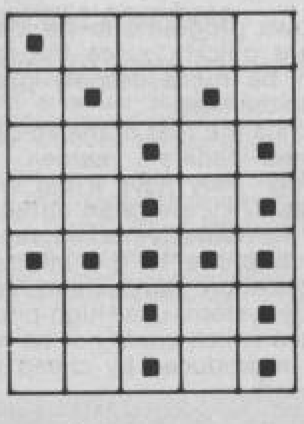


Diagram Two

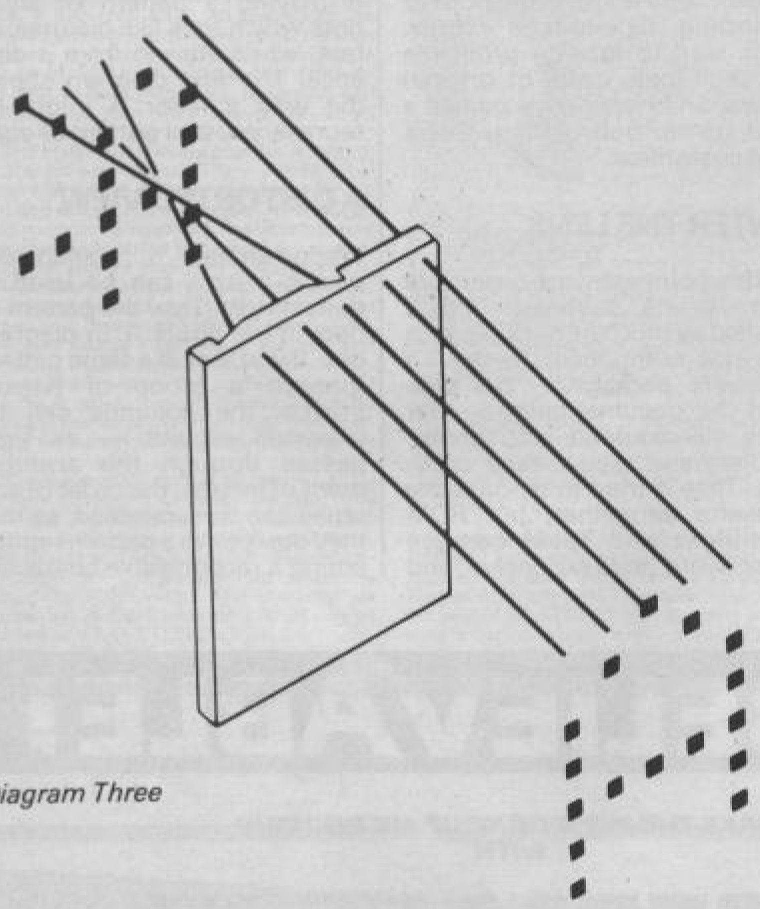


Diagram Three

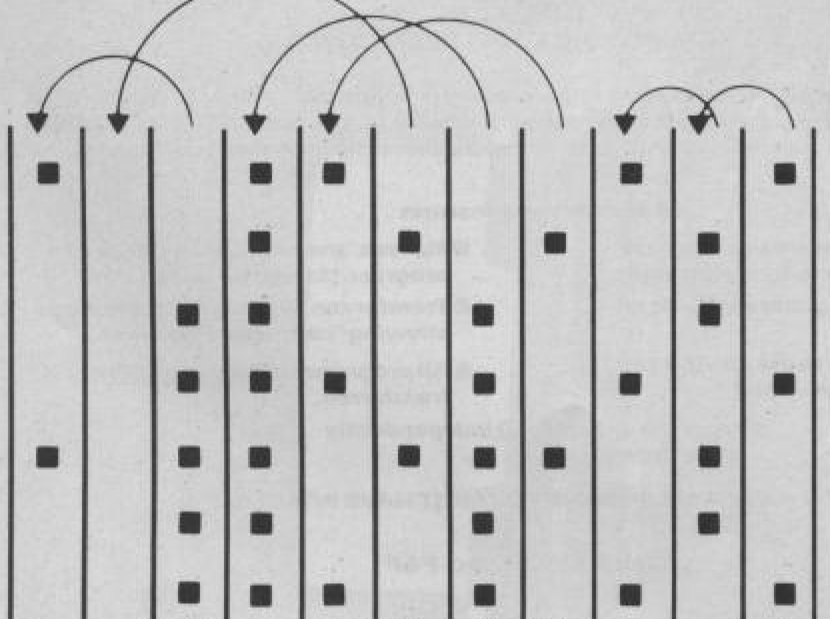


Diagram Four

See diagram two.

The columns are always swapped in the same sequence by a given group of prisms, or 'lens', so it follows that a lens used to scramble the dots which make up a letter can be used to un-scramble a pattern of dots produced by swapping the columns in a letter, providing those columns have been swapped round appropriately. This is shown in the third diagram.

This principle forms the basis of **Lenslok**, an optical 'key' invented by a new firm called ASAP Developments. (Indeed, the diagrams used here are taken from their brochure — with thanks.) Lenslok is used on new Spectrum programs like *Elite*. Interestingly, Firebird also use headerless files in *Elite*, which will make Microdrive owners legitimately angry — yet again they have to resort to subterfuge to get their games to load onto Microdrive. One would have thought that Lenslok protected their Microdrive copies just as well as their cassette. Perhaps this 'belt and braces' approach is a sign that Lenslok has weaknesses . . .

WORKED EXAMPLE

Anyhow, *Elite* displays a scrambled pattern when it is first loaded. If you look at the pattern through the lens you see two characters, and you have ten seconds to type them at the keyboard. If you've not got the lens all you see is a jumble of dots. If you can't type the correct characters within three trys — and there are hundreds of possibilities — the computer resets and you have to re-load the program before you can try again.

Two characters are used, rather than one, since this makes it much harder to guess the correct code — there are more possibilities and the columns which make up the two characters can be inter-mingled. Some columns on the screen are not visible through the lens at all, so it is difficult to recognise the patterns by eye, especially when you only get ten seconds to think about it! Diagram four shows the way that two characters can be muddled together.

There are millions of possible 'scrambling' patterns, so that a different scrambling routine, and hence a different lens, can used for every program. It's no good trying to use the lens supplied with *Elite* to get started with Digital Integration's *Tomahawk*, for instance . . . .

The lenses can be moulded in one piece from polystyrene (like parts for model kits) so they can be economically produced in small numbers (but not on the kitchen table); a few thousand lenses cost less than 20p each. Each lens comes in a holder which fits inside a cassette box — there are even holes for the prongs which hold the cassette spools.

However, display units vary enormously — the rich and famous have crystal clear monitors, some people have old 26 inch tellies, some use black and white portables and so on. Lenslok has to cope with every possible variation, with the exception of Uncle Sir Clive's Microvision, which luckily doesn't have an aerial socket!

The answer is to let you scale down the display to suit your TV. The Lenslok software displays a pattern which can be expanded or contracted to match the width of the lens holder. In theory, the computer can use this to work out the size of your telly, and hence the width of each column in the scrambled pattern — the bigger your TV, the less dots there will be in each column, since the display must be the same physical size on any set if the lens is to work.

I say 'in theory', because I found that in the case of *Elite*, the lens worked best when the pattern was set up rather wider than the lens holder; but this wasn't too much trouble since, like most people, I treat instructions with healthy scepticism! As part of the set up routine, the computer displays the pattern for the letters "OK" as you expand or contract the display, so it is easy enough to set the right size by eye.

There are a few pitfalls for the unwary; the lenses don't work unless you look directly into them, so you can't use them properly if your TV is on the floor or on a high shelf. They don't work if you've got both eyes open, and they have to be lined up quite carefully to avoid distortion of the image.

That said, Lenslok is a major step forward in the Spectrum software market, because it is an effective way to dissuade tape-to-tape copiers. It remains to be seen whether or not Lenslok will make a major difference to the amount of copying that goes on — *Elite* is not much fun without the instructions anyway — but if it does, that's good news for everyone that buys software.

Micro software is becoming more and more sophisticated and development costs are going up and up. Some of the best ideas never make their way into code because they would cost more to develop than could be recouped from sales — if the pirates take their cut. Effective software protection, at a low cost, ought to bring down the price of top software. It could also encourage software houses to produce some of the special-purpose programs which never see the light of day at the moment.

Don't turn a blind eye to Lenslok!

Further details on the Lenslok system can be obtained from ASAP Developments Ltd, 65 Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2DR

WIN SIR CLIVE'S BIOGRAPHY AND HALF A LIBRARY'S WORTH OF SPECTRUM BOOKS

In the DUCKWORTH's Bookworm and Software Competition

The people at Duckworths, publishers of Rodney Dale's biography of Sir Clive Sinclair, are going to give six lucky CRASH readers plenty to read in 1986. Rodney Dale was one of the founder members of Cambridge Consultants, and has been associated with Sir Clive for over twenty years. Now he's drawn on a wealth of personal experience (and some of the Sinclair Research Files) to write a fascinating biography of the man behind the British home computer market. Appearing as a hardback book, *The Sinclair Story* should provide a good read for any Spectrum owner.

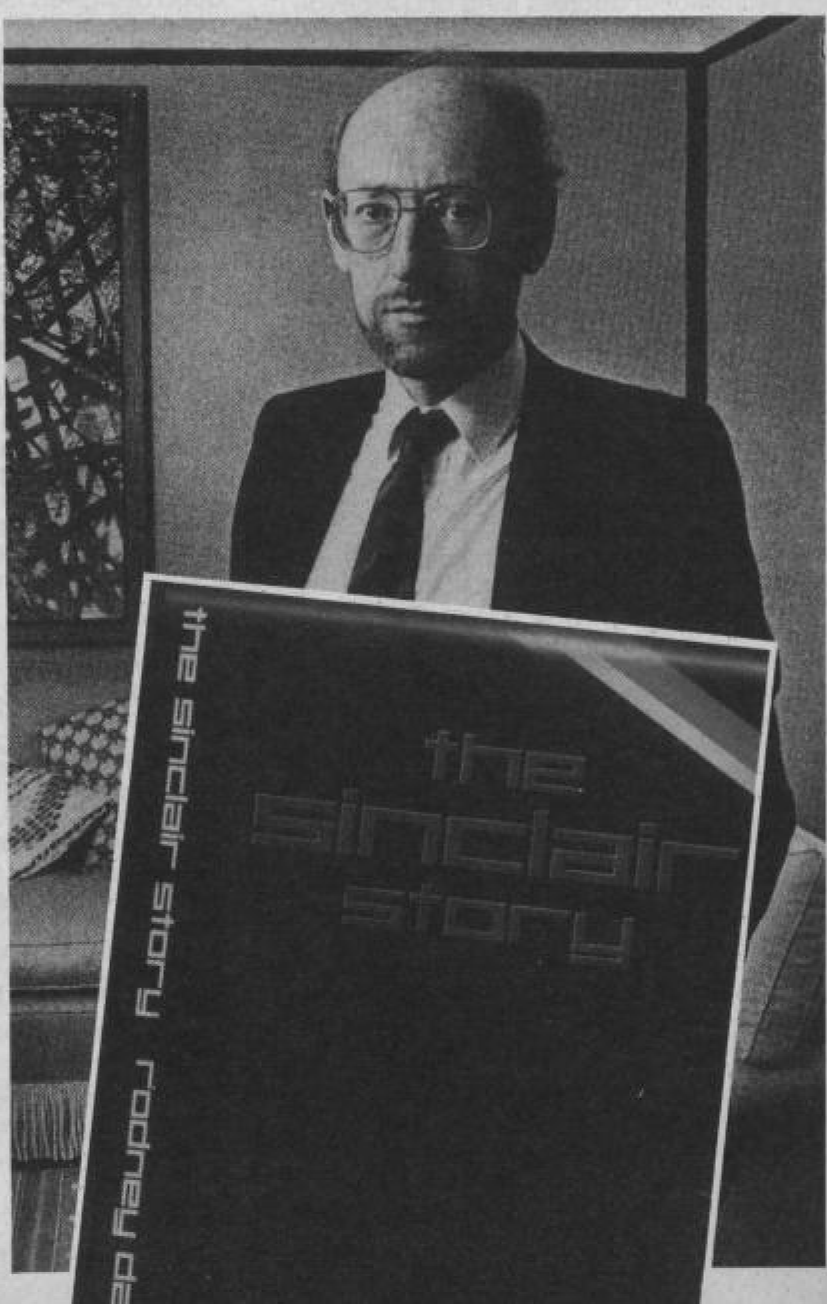
Next issue, we'll be running a full review of the book — our Reviewing Minion has already read it, and is well impressed. By way of a little taster, we are able to offer six copies of *The Sinclair Story as part of a Duckworth's Prize Package. Also in the large parcel of books the six winners will receive in due course, are the following Duckworths titles: Exploring Adventures on the Spectrum* (including the cassette, which allows you to load the example programs straight into your computer without lots of typing in); *My Spectrum Computer and Me*; *The Spectrum Adventurer*; *Spectrum Graphics* and *Spectrum Programs*. More than enough reading material to get your brain going. To add to the prize, there's also a couple of pieces of software: *Tycoon* and *Poker* from the folks at Ducksoft.

Sir Clive has been responsible for a number of innovative products. He's not just a computer man, you know. He first made his name selling construction kits mail order to electronics buffs, and was the brains behind a range of tinyfied products such as the Micromatic mini-radio, pocket calculators, the Black Watch and HiFi separates — all before he got involved in computers.

What we want you to do, is apply your inventive brain to dreaming up a new product for Sir Clive. You can leave the computer side of things to his development engineers — we don't want any MORE speculation on the 128K Spectrum, or Spectrum Portables or anything like that. And we can probably survive without any C5, C6 or C1 jokes, too. No, what we want is a brand new product (probably something tiny, and to do with elecktrickery to be true to form) that Sir Clive might launch during 1986.

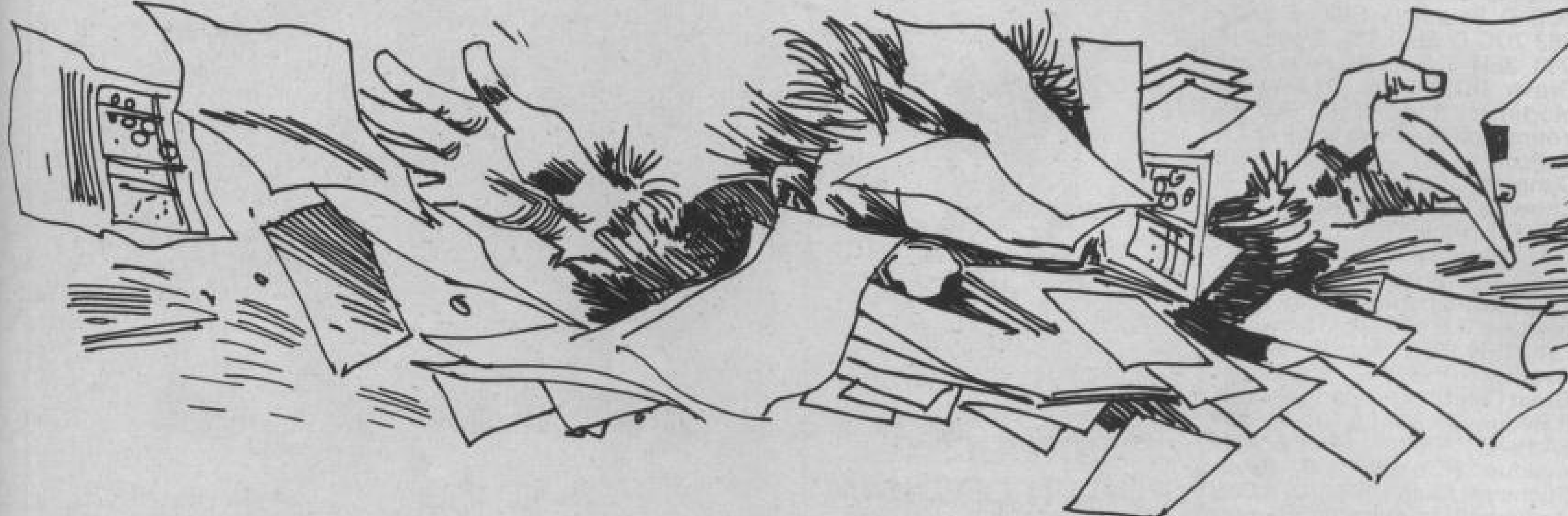
Get your thinking caps on, and come up with a product design. You can draw your New Doobrie, or just write about it — or pop a prototype in the post if you like.

Whatever you decide to do, get your entry in to THE SINCLAIR STORY, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January, when the great Sinclair New Invention Comp will be judged by a specially selected panel of CRASH Minions.



WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

RESULTS EXTRAVAGANZA



IN WHICH YOUR COMPETITION MINION STRUGGLES WITHOUT HIS ALPHABETISER

Another year comes quietly to a close, and casting an eye over the competitions I've arranged for you ungrateful lot to enter over the Chrismas hols I'm left dreading the 30th January. It's going to be another thirty-six hour stint, locked away in the broom cupboard with nothing to keep me company but a letter opener and boxes and boxes of comp entries and a broken alphabetiser for company (that's why you're going to have to look a bit harder this time, to see if you've one a prize).

Still, I should have learnt by now, that you lot aren't interested in my problems. It's prizes, prizes, prizes all the time as far as you're concerned. Not even a Chrissy card for your faithful minion, I know. "Can't afford the stamp — need it for my competition entries" I hear you cry. Hah!

Oh well, on with the results. You may notice that the SCOOBY SNACK comp results aren't included this issue. Don't fret - there were just soooo many good entries that judging was still going on while the Art Dept were screaming for this bit of typesetting so they could finish the Christmas Special and go home for an early dose of Turkey and Pud. February Issue, without fail. Promise.

JUGGERNAUT COMPETITION

Well well, There's a lot of CB owning CRASH readers out there in the great wide world. Lots and Lots of entries, and most of them correct. KERRY BOSTOCK **of Highfield Drive CH7 2AL was the first person to pass under my scrutionous (sounds nasty, doesn't it?) nose. A Video of the film CONVOY will be on its way to you, as well as a copy of the game.**

And you lot, listed here, haven't got too much to moan about. Copies of *Juggernaut*on their way to you, too. Toodle Ooo!

A Nonymous, Burnaston Road, B28 8DH Caroline Pettit, Hawthorn Way, CB8 9XZ Neil Wood, Scholfield Road, Coventry Marc James, Main Street, LE12 5PE Catherine Shaw, Simons Close, SK13 9NE David Ainsworth Brockholes Crescent FY6 8HU P Bullough Meadow Drive HR4 7EF Richard Butterfield Gold Street Yorkshire M Collins Ermin Street GL3 4HW C Crane Constance Avenue ST4 8TE Matthew Denton Dothans Close Bedfordshire Derek Flint The Gardens DE5 8JW J Gillingham Newman Road EX4 1PH J Harvey Sawley Road DE7 3EF S Holland Rothersthorpe Road NN4 9HY A Hulmes Mayfield Road WA15 7SZ C Jackson Causeway PE21 7AR J Jackson Pinehurst Road SN2 1QF C Johnston Fieldway Crescent Isle Of Wight Jason Lofthouse Herbert Street BB12 8RH B Learoyd Wellstone Avenue L13 4EH G Moore Lower Street GL5 2HT J Morrison Gopher Avenue G71 6HR R G Smith Lichfield Drive Il19 8AP J Stevenson Rothley Way NE6 3EW P Talbot Headland Avenue DN22 5AB Lydon Tymins Gladstone Street B71 1ET Andrew Mason Woodland Way, SO5 9HE

MACMILLAN FOOTIE COMP WINNER

D I Harris, of Gainsborough Drive WV6 7NR is the lucky person whose entry was the first correct one out of the football competition box. A trip out in due course for him or her and a copy of MacMillan's *World Cup Soccer* for the rest of you listed here:

D Robertson Moulsham Drive CM2 9QA J Rolph Penrhyn Road Far Cotton NN9 4EE C Mil Homens Rippon Way AL4 9AJ M Richardson Earlescourt HU6 8BD P Newton Sandringham Crescent East Herrington Tyne & Wear A.R Mellett Beaufort Road Frampton Cotterell BS17 2AD J.R Bartlett Irsley Gardens GL3 3AU C Stefanuti Nether Hall Road BD17 6QD N Knowles Winstree Road CM0 8ET A Higgott Bedonwell Road DA7 5PW R Nicholson East Street M34 5BX C Midghall Irwell Birch Green WN8 6JZ R Young Jubilee Road BS23 3AW P Redington Martin Grove SM4 5AJ J Hoar Foster Road CM9 8PZ J.D.S. Carvalho Rua Guerra Junqueiro Coimbr 4 Portugal D.A Stevenson Broad Walk SE3 8NE C Moss Godmans Lane CO6 1NE J Wilson Angle Terrace NE28 7BQ S Stephenson Heugh Road NE66 3TJ S Northwood Hazelwells Road Shropshire P Sennett Yeading Lane UB4 0EN S Moore St.Richards Drive West Sussex M Jenkins Walton Road KT8 0HZ A Taylor Manor Hall Road BN4 4ND A.G Pratt Holberry Gardens S10 2FR J Short Ty Perllan LL36 9NF M Bullock The Greenway HP10 8BX R Whittington School Lane WN6 0TE N Brownlee Winston Place TD1 2EL M Bell Shore Road BT22 2RP K Tennant Argyll Road Scotland G Duncan Scotland Drive KY12 7TW S Mahlane Hastings Road N11 2RJ M Franks Ladywood Road West Midlands R Judd Croxdale Terrace NE1 0RR N Grantham Irving Road CV1 2AX L Ainsworth Brockholes Crescent FY6 8HU W Kingsberry Holywood Road BT4 2PA A Stevens Badger Road S13 7TX S Houlet Summerlands Park Drive TA19 9BW I Muir Crofthead Drive Cramlington Northumberland M Kilner Heathcote Avenue AL10 0RH M Aldridge Greenfern Avenue SL1 6AQ K Greener Featherstone DH3 4NB G Webster Church Road WA11 8QH S Hogan Green Acre NG8 4DT P Tabor Fairview Grove WV11 1BZ P Sheppard Alstone Lane GL51 8JA

DALEY'S SUPERTEST RESULTS

Allright, smartibootsies. O'War an' all! Just you play Minion's Revenge this issue. That'll teach you. Fifty copies of *Daley Thompson's Supertest* go winging off to the following persons:

N M Robinson Marks Road RM7 7AF A Hulmes Mayfield Road WA15 7SZ F Wedge Newhall Street WS11 1AD G Taylor Hartlebury Way GL52 6YB C Roberts Swanmere Park SY12 0NA H Evans Wennington Road PR9 7TN I King Foxyard Road DY4 8BH J Blakeston Sydney Grange HU3 3SL J Prior Sutlej Road SE7 7DB M Hanney St. Benedict Crescent CF4 4DQ S Bowran Merden Avenue SO5 ▶

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

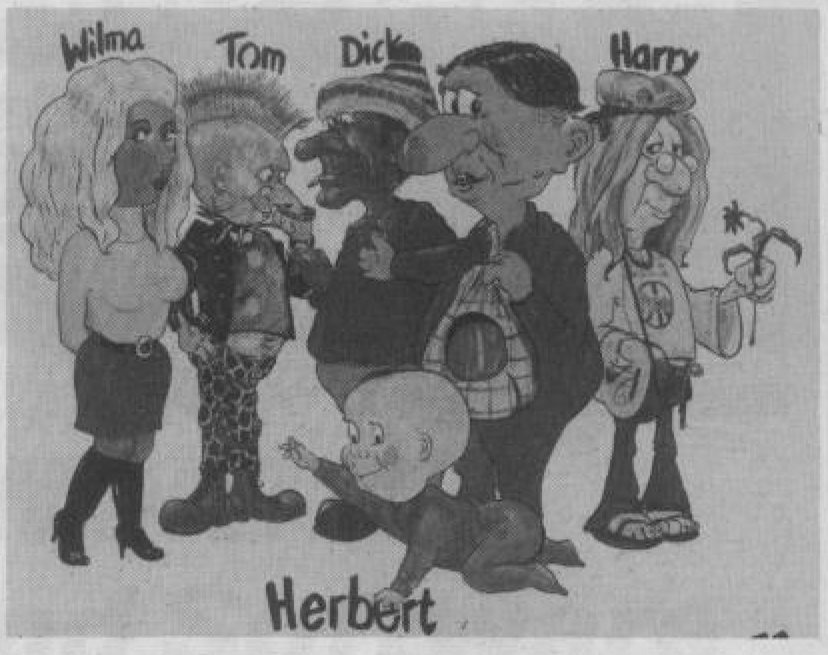
1EJ J Gomez St.Johns Avenue NW10 4EE F Oattes Burg mostermanslaan 17 5737 The Netherlands R Brady Edward Road RM6 6UH T Hardman Walter Street WA1 3TE T Barber Lingswood Park NN3 4TB The Occupier Kingswood Road IG3 8UB D Saunders Station Road S63 7DG D Gray The Broadway DY1 3EH J Gott Bracken Bank Grove BD22 7BG D Maytum Mortimer Road BM8 9HP A Young Lothian Drive EH22 4EZ K Enticott CH3 7BA R King Dunmore Street G63 0TX N Knowles Winstree Road CM0 8ET R Norfolk Grays Close ST7 3LU J Sims Laburnum Road UB3 4JY J Aron Bruntwood Lane SK8 1HS I Billingham Meredith Road Sedgley J.G O'Brien Tamworth Lane CR4 1DH R Rock St.Hughes Avenue HP13 7TZ M Bodger Great Cambridge Road EN1 4DB P Redington Martin Grove SM4 5AJ C Smith Southcoates Avenue HU9 4PP M Sayer Stiencroft Road LS25 5AX A Cop Archers Ride Herts A Higgott Bedonwell Road DA7 5PW D Gritz Cairn Court FY4 2QQ M Reeve Inverness Road N18 2EE A.J Fairbairn Red Lonning CA28 5XF B Connelly Hilton Road G64 3EB G Pugh Ascot Close CF5 5BE D Shiach Dailuaine Terrace AB3 9PX C Brown Hafod Las Pencoed CF35 5NB A Macleod Macaulay Road PA87 2HB J Woodall Staveley Road HU9 4UA P Orrock Pullgr Terrace PH1 2QF N Wilson Weekites GU7 2DB S Lilley Raynham Crescent BD21 2TP B Gavin Uppingham Road LE5 4DP



CRASH QUIZ (ROBERT LEEDHAM COMP)

Very nearly slipped through the Minion's Finely cast net this one. The CRASH Towers mice have been eating it. Three people can thank Robert Leedham for helping them win a T Shirt and ½25-worth of software. They are: **Stephen Rutherford**, Robsland Avenue, KA7 2RW; **Colin Mather**, Carlisle Close, Dunstable, Beds and **Martin Wakely**, Orson Leys, CV22 5RF

Three more people should be nearly-as-grateful to Uncle Robert, as they win a T Shirt each, thanks to his Quiz: **N Hewitt**, Northmoor Way, BH20, 4EG **Harry Maton**, Leslie Park Road, CR0 6TN and **J A Morrison**, Sceptre St, NE4 6PR



WALLY QUESTIONNAIRE WINNERS

At last we've collated the results from the Wally Questionnaire wot was set a while ago. Lack of space prevented a smidgeon of the findings finding their way into this issue, but 1986 is going to be a whole new year. A trio of Wallies will start the year with a new CRASH T shirt and CRASH hat each. They are: **Jon Stewart**, Roseanne Archenfield Road, HR9 5AY; **Tom Haigh**, Newhall Lodge, B76 8PH and **Mark Oldham**, Brattray Drive, M24 3WW

And that's all for this year. Have a lucky 1986!

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....

postcode

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My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

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My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

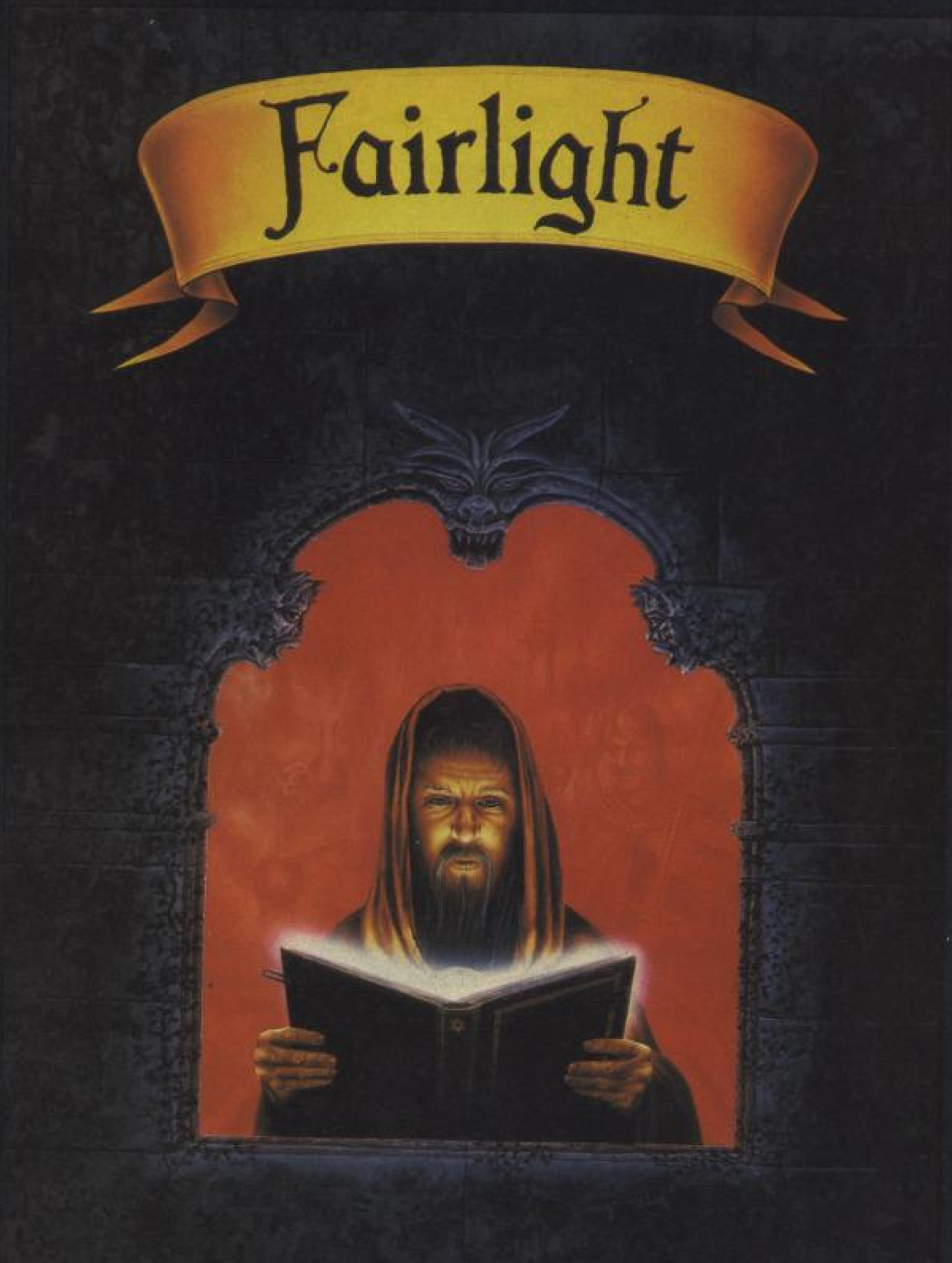
TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
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3	
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5	



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48K Spectrum

Chronicles of the Land of Fairlight
1. A Prelude: The Light Revealed



BY BO JANGEBORG

(author of 'The Artist')

"Maybe *the* game of the year!"
Your Spectrum, November 1985

". . . one of the most sophisticated games the Spectrum has ever seen."
". . . one of the ten best programs ever made for the Spectrum."
Popular Computing Weekly, October 1985.

". . . the best arcade adventure of the year."
Your Spectrum, November 1985

THE EDGE

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DEREK BREWSTER'S

Adventure Trail

YOUNG AND INNOCENT (Daddy, What was the future like?)

IT **IS ALWAYS** a difficult task summing up a year in home computing. Even more difficult is to try and predict what the coming twelve months might unleash upon us. I say unleash because whatever else might be said about the home games world, it is never dull: the competition is ruthless, and it is peopled by the sort of mathematical genius who is past his mental zenith at the age of twenty-five years, give or take a few million brain cells.

The press and media are at a loss to explain why Britain, a rather insignificant and petty nation, should concern itself with such an exciting and blatantly intellectual pastime. After all, isn't this a country in decline, a divided nation where the people who read the lightweight newspapers await an answer to all the problems while the people who read the heavyweights are struggling hopelessly with the economic conundrums of interest rates and exchange rates. Perhaps it's time to start thinking straight and doing things which come rather more easily to nations not so schizophrenic. Buying your own country's goods isn't a bad start.

I remember when I was at school, and it wasn't all that long ago, much time in geography lessons would be spent learning about the manufacturing base of the British Isles. In Lancashire they had the cotton industry, in the coalfields of the Midlands and North they had steel, while in the mountains that divided these areas you had hydro-electric power, sheep, and mineral mines. I'd give away a whole shelf-load of silly pencil-top gonks to sit in such a geography lesson now (just how many different breeds of sheep are there)?

The House of Lords, by far the most coherent chamber as, despite the participants' ages, they are not honour-bound by political allegiance, stated Britain should look to the new technologies as herein lies the next revolution. Couldn't agree more. And so it would seem to be with the public who went out and bought the Sinclair computers despite much in the press about the unreliability of the machines. Much was made of the lack of sound when everyone knew full well that Sinclair's competitors were caught in the no man's land between beeps and buzzes and the full-bodied melodies of a synthesizer. The truth is the sound on these machines grinds after a short time and the demure bleeps of the Spectrum come as a blessed relief.

I read a local paper recently that put forward the reasons behind buying a microcomputer this Christmas. Quite rightly some of the points they raised included amount of software available, price, and whether little Johnny's friends had the micro. It was curious to find the article extolling the BBC computer over the Spectrum. Let me put this as bluntly as I can. The Spectrum microcomputer is a brilliant device both for learning BASIC etc. and for playing games. I own, or have owned, an Atari, a BBC, an Amstrad, and a C64 and all have some major flaw in design, screen layout, add-on capability or available memory. What is more, the Spectrum was quite merrily computing away long before the others and so has a quantity and breadth (and availability) of software which leaves the others looking nice in the shops.

As for the QL, yes, the microdrives are unreliable, but we live in times where rapidly-developing technology must be offered at an affordable price, and who would begrudge Clive Sinclair when NASA's budgetry constraints had DIY men throughout the world laughing at some tiles which just wouldn't stick.

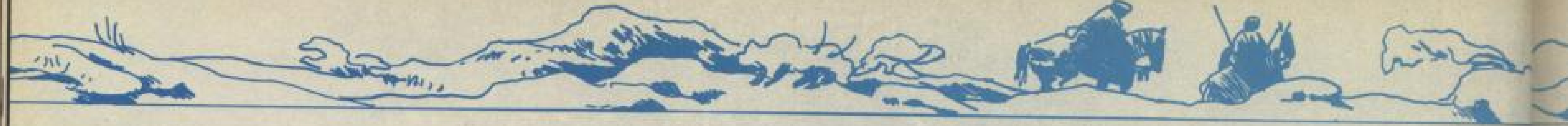
And it's no use laughing at the C5 while you pollute the atmosphere in your heap of rusting junk whose technology has changed little since its inception. Arthur C Clarke's (and Daddy's) visions of the future, with the printless world, gigantic space colonies, and the kind of mentality that goes with them, may not ever be quite as anticipated, but there is no need for the cynical techno-fear as displayed in such media mishmashes as Tomorrow's World and Micro Live. I suggest the first person who had the ludicrous idea of making technology more palatable in this dreadful manner go and write some techno-fear soap operas and leave the task to someone who is prepared to deal with the facts sensibly and reliably. Admittedly, this would remove any chance of political tampering with the facts, but it is a political reality that the new technologies are coming whether we like it or not. Any nation which actually gets to grips with the technology as opposed to the 'subject for discussion' will reap the undoubted rewards.

1985 was notable for the demise of MSX. MSX was a good idea, making a range of machines between which software was fully compatible. The only problem was, there was already a great deal of compatibility between the Spectrums that everyone was buying in droves. The Spectrum has, and will, last longer than either myself or other commentators thought possible.

This year was notable for the escalation in the tie-in battles with major film titles such as Gremlins, Rambo, View to a Kill and Never Ending Story gracing the computer store shelves. The advantage to these deals is the recognition a product gets through the public's familiarity with the concept and storyline. TV tie ins can be even more effective in terms of public awareness of the product. These thoughts lead me on to an area which, to me, has really made itself plain over the last year.

The perceivable age of the home games playing market seems to have dropped steadily down through the teens to the point where anything beyond a platform game is seriously questioned in terms of its likely viability in the market place. There's nothing inherently wrong or worrying about the spectre of a carry-cot Spectrum attachment with that all important fire button within reach of tiny hands, it's just that one shudders to think what popular music there would be right now if it wasn't for the older listeners pulling the whole standard of music up by its bootstraps. It is my guess that if the reading age of Sounds and NME fell by a few years those who, on paper, would benefit by such a fall would loose interest in the whole ostensibly uplifting exercise.

And all this brings me back to adventuring (believe it or not). The demise of the intelligent, text-only, adventure epitomised by Level 9's *Snowball*, and mourned in SIGNPOST, is a part of this lowering of the intellectually exacting nature of computer games. In a nutshell, programs have become simpler. Utilities such as the *Quill* and *Illustrator* will continue to figure prominently in adventuring, and it doesn't take much of a jump to realise that they will be more important in all games' design in the near future. In America the computer games market is older because the machines Americans own are larger and more expensive, and more useful to the whole household. In Britain home computers are toys. It remains to be seen whether the market is going for the gutter or searching for the stars. ▶



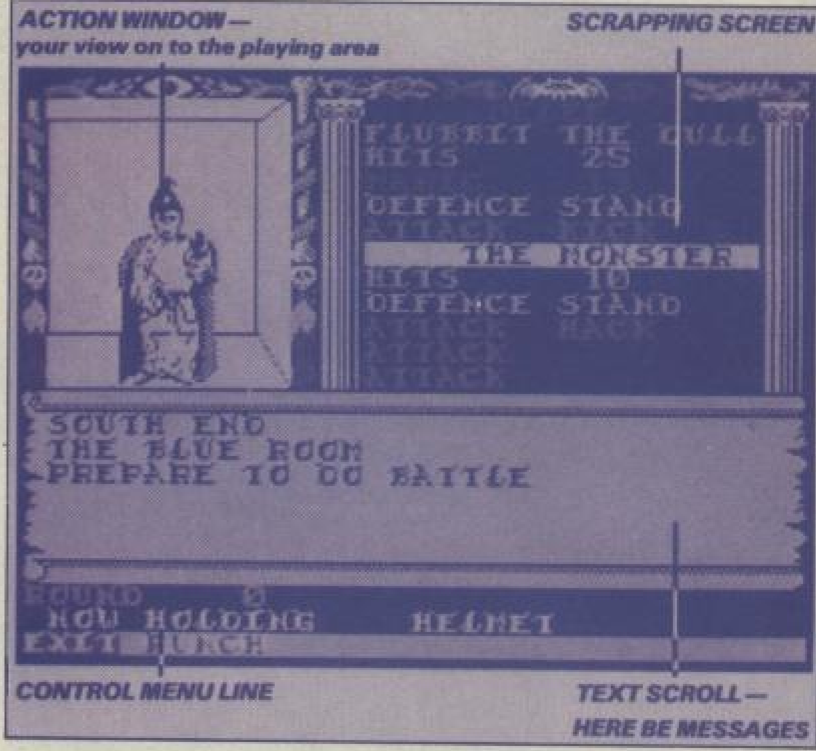
SWORDS AND SO-RCERY

Producer: PSS
Price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mike Simpson**

Some games are big because of large budgets, others because of large and prominent advertising. And some games are big because they attempt something new, and advance the limits of programming just that bit further. *Swords and Sorcery* is one of the games which has earned a reputation solely on the length of time and concerted effort expended on its completion. As with all ambitious programming efforts the date of completion was put back time and time again — but it hasn't surfaced at such a bad time, being in sight of Christmas and those long winter evenings.

Recently, complicated games haven't been given the reception which was their due in the early days of home computing. I think the reasons behind this are twofold. The first reason is the way in which the home computer games market is becoming both broader and shallower as if the bubbling cauldron of energy and ideas that was this industry had run its course and now lines up with all the other consumables, stuck in the mud of a silted up estuary. Reason two is the average age of games players which has fallen right down through the teens to the point where anything greater than keeping a fire button depressed for five minutes is thought educationally over-demanding. Now you might think, wouldn't all this be better placed in an editorial (and indeed, since I haven't written this month's, these very words could reappear there yet) and not in a review. Well, if this game does not recoup in chart success all the man hours put into it this paragraph may seem just that bit more interesting.

It would seem every major new project requires a buzz word, as if the computer games industry were out to create a subculture language all of its own. In this case *S & S* presents us with MIDAS where, for the very first time, the computer plays the part of your eyes much as the camera plays the part of that geezer's eyes when he crashes that medics party in St. Elmo's Fire. You know the bit, he's dripping wet and she turns round and she ends up telling him how she just puts out the rubbish and things like everyone else. (I hope the Ed doesn't delete this stuff — this is very inventive writing). On the left side of the screen your view of the catacombs is smoothly animated and does indeed give the impression of a cartoon film. As you approach a chest or a bottle you seem to bounce up and down — just as you do when walking on a street — and you can even jump: the room and objects before you fall and rise again as you land on your feet.



The other characters and creatures you meet in the dungeon are also smoothly animated as they wander the corridors. There are treasure rooms to plunder, caverns to explore and pits to avoid. Failing to successfully negotiate a pit results in the walls of the pit whizzing past you as you plummet to an early exit. The goal that transcends all others is the search for the four parts of the priceless Armour of Zob, a Master Armourer who fashioned the masterpiece in distant antiquity.

On the right side of the screen is either displayed an aerial view of the quadrant you are in or a rather intimidatingly complicated set of labels and figures which flash up once combat has begun. At the bottom of the screen is a revolving sequence of options. Keys 0 and 8 revolve the options while key 9 chooses that option at the far left end of this strip. Flashing arrows indicate where movement is possible and I'll doubt whether a single person could play this game and not come away with the impression that this arrangement is both awkward and clumsily designed. The truth is it doesn't quite work.

In battle, momentary panic can set in followed quickly by frustration as the player struggles to get the right set of options flowing one after the other. But even when in a comparatively calm situation the clumsiness of this system is all too apparent. Take this attempt to get an object from a chest where OPEN CHEST, GET SANDWICH, EAT SANDWICH would suffice in, say, The Hobbit. EXIT ,ACT, SMASH, CHEST, HANDLE, TAKE OUT, CHEST, SANDWICH, HANDLE, ACT, EAT does the job in *S & S* here, which is not only longer but, remember, involves all that revolving option palaver at the bottom of the screen.

Loading up the game you are presented with three options: Default Game which sees you take on the role of Flubbit the Dull, a ready-made character with an uninspiring name, Load Game which restores a previously saved character, and New Character where you select a name and training scheme for your character. This training scheme allows you 14 days to train with 12 masters and gives your character the opportunity to improve its sword skills, or

perhaps its thievish abilities, eg picking locks. Forty dragons teeth is your budget for armoury.

As with all complex subjects *S & S* has an authorative and full account of the world you will enter. To summarise all that is said therein would be a difficult task indeed. Perhaps a good way of showing what to expect is to give three examples (which will probably remind many of D&D guide books):

SPELL — FIREBOLT: *a small blast of magical fire which will burn some of your foes. It does about the same as a hefty sword blow (from an inexperienced swordsman), range — line of sight.*

SPELL — UN-POISON: *this spell will neutralise any poisonous substance imbibed, ingested or injected into the user, preventing it from doing any more damage (poison damage is spread over a period of time), range — personal.*

MONSTER — MAGES: *there are two sorts of mages, the lesser and greater varieties. They are visually identical and the greater is recognised by the fact that he uses more powerful spells. Mages disdain hand-to-hand combat and will always attempt to keep their distance and cast spells. Due to the fact that they do not wear armour or carry much equipment they also move quite quickly.*

You will notice the period of time aspect to poison noted in the UN-POISON spell and this is a very sophisticated concept in this game. For this reason a close eye should be kept on your character's strength and spell power whilst handling mysterious objects. Some items you pick up will instil within you tremendous powers and the ability to deal with all but the deadliest of foes. On the darker side some arefacts will parasitize your strength and negate your efforts, draining the very life blood from your hapless character.

Swords and Sorcery is a super attempt to bring the sheer depth of D&D to the computer screen. Rare for this type of game are the impressive graphics and brilliant animation showing in the best way possible the excitement of exploring monster-filled dungeons. Considering the amount of time spent programming it, and the high quality of the graphics, it is hard to imagine many who wouldn't be prepared to invest the time in getting to know how to play the game in order to delve deeper, cultivate their character and reap the rich rewards.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: playing is hard to begin with
Graphics: very good
Presentation: super
Input facility: revolving options from larger menu
General rating: ambitious and outstanding addition to the games playing world

Atmosphere	8
Vocabulary	9
Logic	8
Addictive quality	9
Overall	9

SEAS OF BLOOD

Producer: Fighting Fantasy
Price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Authors: **Mike Woodroffe & Brian Howarth**

Seas of Blood is a game fashioned by big names from both the Fantasy Game and Adventure worlds. From the role-playing, Fighting Fantasy book corner come Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, who wrote the book of the same name. From the Adventure corner we have Mike Woodroffe and Brian Howarth who are the names behind Adventure International's impressive *Robin of Sherwood.* Put them together and you could get something which might knock the spots off the opposition, or you might end up with something just that bit smaller than either of these two giants. Read on to find out which is true . . .

Seas of Blood has been specifically written to encompass both the playability of the fighting fantasy combat system and the problem solving of the adventure world. The game features over 300 locations, all with graphics, together with an animated dice sequence that represents the fighting fantasy combat system.

The city of Tak, at the northern end of the Inland Sea, is the greatest den of thieves, pirates and cut-throats the civilised world has ever seen. In this city of scum there are many pirates infamous for their ruthless

greed, daring raids and countless skirmishes with death. One of these scoundrels is you, the captain of the pirate vessel Banshee. Together with your band of seasoned cut-throats you search for treasure around the Inland Sea which is the vehicle of much of your exploration. To be a successful pirate you should locate and retrieve 20 treasures and take them to the top of the mountain on Nippur at the southern end of the Inland Sea. Movement around this sea is achieved with the use of commands like SAIL NORTH. Leaving and boarding the ship is achieved with SWIM while at sea, with GO ASHORE when adjacent to land, and GO BOAT when by another vessel. BOARD BENSHEE takes you back onto your own vessel.

This is one of those adventures where you could either say 'I've seen all this before' or 'this really has got a number of new features'. The curious thing is neither of these statements is incorrect it's just that the overriding feeling is more in line with the 'I've seen it all before' argument. Yes folks this is yet another Brian Howarth implementation of a big idea. The reason I take this tone is not because it is necessarily a bad thing when a programmer takes on many such projects. No, not at all, it is only a bad thing when that programmer keeps churning out the same string of programming faults so painstakingly picked over in this very column time and time again. When a programmer stands still its bad news in an industry which never will. A glaring white background is bad enough (especially on a colour set which often needs resetting just to play the one inconsiderate game — after all, how often do TV broadcasts choose white as a background colour: send your answers to Adventure International) but when it is constantly removed and flashed up again as in this game it becomes irritating in the extreme.

Whenever something is picked up or dropped, or the ship you captain is moved along, the whole screen is taken away and placed back up again. It is particularly strange when you chose to sail in a direction which is not permissible and the screen does its ridiculous flash routine.

On the new features front the game can offer one or two surprises. The best of these is the combat routine. This ties in with a status page that can be called up along with the inventory by pressing the letter I. On this page are you and your crew's vital statistics: Log, Provisions, Skill, Stamina, Crew Strike and Crew Strength. The number of days you have spent on the voyage are recorded under Log while Provisions generally decrease accordingly as one provision can maintain a ship for one day at sea. Provisions are not used on shore and food can be found under various guises as you go on your pirating way.

Skill is your personal skill as a fighter and you will probably want to compare it to that of your opponent in any hand-to-hand combat. Its value is important as during combat its figure is added to the random figure which is the sum of the values shown on the two faces of dice which spin and stop before you. Your opponent's dice are stopped from spinning by the computer, while your dice spin until you chance your arm. The spin of the dice is shown by very quickly changing figures as well as dice faces. These figures are in random sequences.

Stamina will generally decrease as you are wounded during a battle but hopefully not as quickly as your opponent's who is seen off once his Stamina reaches zero. Crew Strike and Crew Strength are of greatest interest during ship-to-ship conflict where Strike represents the attacking power of your crew while aboard the Banshee, and Crew Strength shows how the shipmates are holding up to the onslaught of the battle.

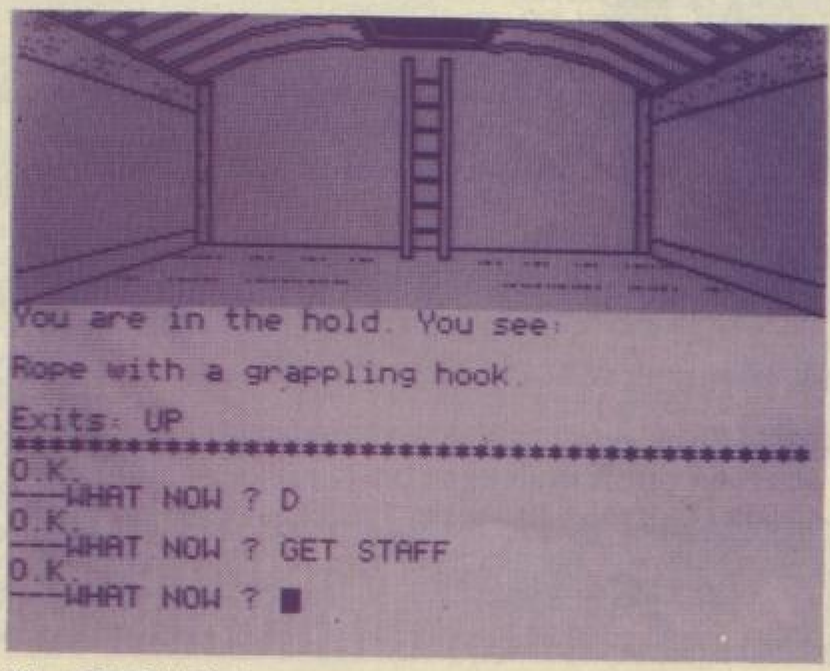
Seas of Blood is a very entertaining game but will not automatically attract those adventurers, both experienced and novice, who delighted in the sheer slickness of *Robin of Sherwood*. One obvious reason might be the lack of the kind of stunning graphics found in *Touchstones of Rhiannon* as the skills of the artist Teoman Irmak were not available for this game. Another might be the less than friendly vocabulary, or the lack of the GET EVERYTHING and AGAIN commands which bring a touch of class to adventure games (the A for AGAIN command would have been very useful when sailing repeatedly in the same direction).

The problem is, Adventure International have set themselves very high standards to maintain and we reviewers are easily digruntled. The plusses, like the combat system, are welcome additions — it's just the minuses begin to jar a little in this one.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: difficult to get into but then easier
Graphics: good
Presentation: white glares on colour TV (still)
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: reasonable
General rating: aaaahh, Jim lad!

Atmosphere	8
Vocabulary	6
Logic	7
Addictive quality	7
Overall	7



SHADOW OF THE UNICORN

Producer: Mikro-Gen
Price: **£14.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mikro-Gen team**

This latest game from Mikro-Gen has a lot to live up to. It has been hailed as the first Mikro-Plus game with an additional 16K memory supplied via a piece of hardware which plugs into the back of the Spectrum. This Mikro-Plus interface has a joystick port and so the game can be played with a joystick. This facility also allows copies to be transferred to tape or microdrive. Without a joystick the game plays well on a keyboard and on side two of the tape you receive with the game is a head alignment routine to ensure trouble free loading from your tape recorder.

Shadow of the Unicorn is the first piece of software to be actually marketed with a hardware add-on (*Psyclapse* and *Bandersnatch* from the old Imagine team never saw the light of day). The surprising thing about the game is its conspicuous lack of the sort of mind-blowing features one might expect from such an innovative breakthrough. The celebrated *Lords of Midnight* is now one and a half years old and it must be a sad reflection on games design when this game is far inferior in terms of basic structure than that first *Midnight* game.

The fundamental flaw in *Unicorn* is the curious state of affairs that has your character looking, say, south when he is travelling west. The character is literally not looking where he is going! Were this not strange enough there is an added complication found when a character is in a town or village. He may be in a settlement but may only know it for sure after looking through all four compass directions. Getting to a village, castle or other distant object isn't as effective as in the true landscaping adventures, as, ignoring the virtually unchanging backdrop of distant mountains, you can only see the terrain of the adjacent square next to you in the viewing direction. You don't feel as if you are approaching them, you literally see them, you turn and move toward them and then that's it, you're on top of them, whether it be a castle or a windmill. Compare this to *Lords of Midnight* where you could aim for distant lakes and towers and you might see the point I'm making. In these games you get the impression that the towers, keeps etc. actually exist whereas here it is only too obvious that they are an artefice of computer memory. When considering some of the finer aspects of this game, these flaws in design may shrink somewhat but only when games such as *Lords of Midnight* and *Runestone* have temporarily slipped the mind.

It is not only in the area of games design where Mikro-Gen have me puzzled. The game is marketed with a (too) large booklet which is fashioned along Tolkien lines but, as in so many books and booklets that accompany adventures, falls somewhat short of the narrative powers of the great master himself. None but the final two chapters has any great relevance to the computer program.

You might think that a game which makes use of a new piece of technology would have a fine instruction booklet. Not a bit of it. This game has only a flimsy sheet of card giving you a very short summary of the story (much too short given the length of the book) and a few instructions concerning the hardware and its implications. I found on

Sir Fred



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on a Moonlit Knight

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one occasion some difficulty in finding out exactly how to save a game and ended up loosing it, much to my chagrin as I had put in a long session and had progressed well. After the joystick controls (Left — Right for movement, Up to take or drop, Fire to fight, Down to turn view to the right) you get a rather plain list of the characters with 1) Mithulin, King of Oronfal, 2) Avarath, Wizard of the Zim-Faranid, and 3) Holdin, Captain of Falforn up to 10) Lairmath, another Captain of Falforn. Not all of these characters hold equal sway in the stormy lands of Falforn and the royal lands of Oronfal. The three main characters are Mithulin the king of the royal lands, Rolquin queen of the storm lands and Avarath the wizard who is distinguished by his ability to fireball the irritating monkey-like figure who attacks characters willy-nilly throughout the entire course of the game (later research reveals this persistent assailant to be a nalesh).

Actually, while I'm about it, how about this tip for avoiding the pain in the neck nalesh. Because characters are safe unless you select to move them (there is no real-time element or any urgency with the other characters), and because the nalesh always attacks from the side of the screen furthest from you, avoid the beast by quickly flicking between characters as you move your chosen character across the screen. After only two or three flicks your character ends up being attacked by the nalesh from the wrong side of the screen leaving the character to peacefully leave the screen in the direction chosen and be happily on his or her way.

A convenient way to take you through the logistics of this game is to look at the screen which retains the same format throughout (and should be on this page somewhere unless the powers that be mix up the pictures as with *Warlords/Red Moon*). At the top left is the name of the character you are using at that particular time. Next to this name is the location you are passing through which generally is helpful enough to locate your approximate position on the map supplied with the game (if you are following one of the paths, or you have entered a castle, this position can be verified accurately). Below the name of the character presently playing is the com pass whose arrow does not indicate direction of travel but the viewing direction which only becomes the direction of travel if you swing it around to lie left or right on the screen. The yellow and red bars adjacent have variable lengths to represent generally decreasing energy and (thanks to the aforementioned pain in the necks) increasing injury. Decreasing energy is reversed on eating at one of the magical berry bushes which can be puzzlingly sparse when you really need them, and no doubt there exists some spell to undo the harm of injury. To take no action with either injury or energy can result in a character's death, and loosing an important character can see you starting a new game.

The standard of graphics in this game is rather puzzling given its added memory resources and its destiny as a mega-game. There are quite a number of heavy-handed colour clashes and one piece of animation has the king doing a sort of constipated breakdance. One thing you can do is hand it to the game for clever music effects; the music is in keeping with the game and is very tuneful indeed.

Shadow of the Unicorn is a very good game by any standards. It is complex, has a storyline which is worth the considerable effort getting to know and yet is instantly and enjoyably playable. The tone of this review has been F flat for one very significant reason; the game is costly due to the Mikro-Plus add-on necessary for the additional 16K the game offers. What is a little puzzling (even worrying) is just where this extra memory has been allocated, as the improvements such additions might bring are not immediately apparent.

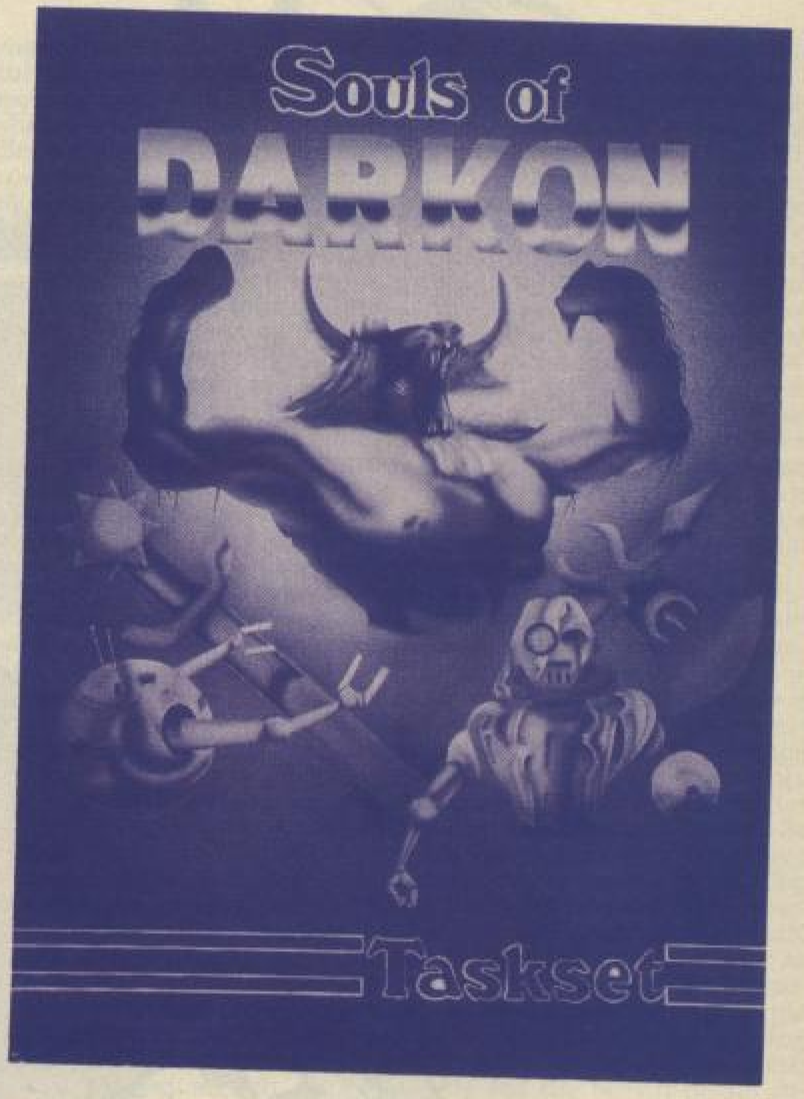
COMMENTS

Difficulty: the most difficult thing is reading the book
Graphics: good, but not as might have been expected
Presentation: simple and easy to get to terms with
Input facility: perhaps could have done with some textual information
General rating: good

Atmosphere	7
Graphics	7
Logic	6
Addictive Quality	7
Overall Value	7

SOULS OF DARKON

Producer: Taskset
Price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **the Taskset Team**



Beyond the sun of Crenal lies the planet Megron. Its people were of genius IQ; they practised both the art of sorcery and that of science. However their quest for knowledge became a dangerous obsession and they ventured into a realm of evil where they released the devastating power of Darkon. The people live in terror. Will they be the next to suffer the curse of Darkon? Only you and your faithful robotic friend, Komputa can free the people from this tyrrany. But can you succeed where so many have failed?

Souls of Darkon is already in the shops on the Amstrad as I write, so whether or not you'll be able to buy the game in the high street is probably academic. The reasons for this game's acceptance by the shops is quite obvious as soon as you load up. Taskset have successfully met their task of taking the adventure and tidying it up. Gone are the messy lists of endlessly scroll ing text and graphics. In their place we have here a neatly boxed-off picture set on the lower left hand side of the screen. Above this is the loca tion description which does not budge an inch throughout — quite an advantage over other adventures where you are constantly wondering where you are. Framed by the static picture and location description is a scrolling area carrying your input and the program's res ponses. The text has been clearly and atmospherically designed, in fact, what with the stylised, cartoon-like graphics, the whole program reveals a novel appearance.

One minor irritation is Task set's inability to get to grips with the Spectrum's input routine (the Amstrad version works just fine). Even when you are carefully typing the auto-repeat effect can catch you out with words like L O O O O K ending up on your scrolling list of past inputs (rather embarrassingly, the input recorded is the exact word you entered and not the word from the program's own word store).

Another gripe is an error which is common to many adventure instructions (*Sorderon's Shadow* did the very same thing last month). The error I refer to is the habit of listing a so-called example of the vocabulary going beyond the simple verb/noun couplings only to find that the program's input routine can't handle such a long sentence, for example, in this case, ATTACK THE WOODMAN WITH THE LUNAR AXE is too long to be akcepted& Ac rious side effect of allowing the location description to remain on screen is the need for a LOOK command which tells you what you can see, eg a bottle, a mushroom, along with the exits. The reason for this, presumably, is the restriction of space on the location description. It may have been better to have made the adventurer work for his/her information with a more intelligent LOOK/EXAMINE command.

Programming the DELETE key to act without the need of the CAPS SHIFT is a nice touch as is the list of words in the vocabulary which comes up onto the screen and stays there while you try and match up some of the words from it.



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Souls of Darkon is a very well presented adventure and a welcome change at a time when just about every mainstream adventure is *Quill*ed. The cartoon-style graphics are very effective and suit the game well.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy to start, then the usual brick wall
Graphics: one colour—green—but attractive
Input facility: a little beyond verb/noun
Response: fast
General rating: some good features

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	7
Addictive Quality	6
Overall	7

THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL

Producer: Mastertronic
Price: **£1.99**
Language: **BASIC & machine code**
Author: **Chris Newcombe**

The Quest for the Holy Grail may seem a familiar title. For one thing, it was the name of a Monty Python film which formed for itself a cult following. Normally thrifty and reserved persons would loose all poise and decorum and rush out to the nearest bookshop and buy the script to the film thereby causing the sort of arguments which raged throughout the land; who would play the geezer (John Cleese in the film) who says in a French accent (now thought essential in all TV comedies) 'I empty my nose in your general direction' or something to that effect. Now, I don't wish to be seen as a kill-joy, but this game leans rather heavily on the film and will now presumably sell more copies than when marketed by Dream Software (under which company's banner it was reviewed in the May 84 CRASH). So one must wonder at the legal implications after many a harmless Star Trek derivative was forced from the market by overbearing directives sent out by Paramount Pictures.

In a nutshell this game is a *Hobbit* look-alike. The differences lie in its speed (it is written in BASIC and seems unnecessarily slow by today's standards), its simpler graphics, and its lack of real time. As in *The Hobbit* it often takes a key depression to scroll up the location description before you can start to input. You begin in a blacksmith's forge where you are at once confronted with the humour which gives the game its distinctive flavour and cult following. 'You see — The nuclear powered lamp. A CND picket. The yellow/green spotted key. The CND picket is sitting next to the lamp chanting, 'We shall, we shall not be moved!!' When you take the nuclear powered lamp the CND picket walks off in a huff.

Having said that this game looses out technically to *The Hobbit* it does in fact have many features to commend it. The use of the full gamut of Spectrum colours is noteworthy, both in pictures and borders and within the text. The problems, so often featured in adventure helplines, are really entertaining and funny, and, as is always the case with problems pitched at just the right level of difficulty, they give a real buzz when finally solved.

The Quest for the Holy Grail is an old program first marketed by Dream Software. It had a cult following in its old format due to its association with a very funny film and its own highly unusual and entertaining problems. What the game lacks in technical competence it compensates with super text and funny goings-on. Well worth the asking price.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy
Graphics: average
Presentation: good
Input facility: basically verb/noun
Response: slow
General rating: good value

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	7
Addictive quality	7
Overall	7



LUDOIDS

Producer: BugByte
Price: **£2.95**
Language: **BASIC & machine code**
Author: **Barry Thorne and James Dann**

Ludoids is a quadruplex adventure which means it comes in four parts. These parts are loaded separately but are linked by the codewords left, in the first part for example, by a graffitti-inspired agent who presumably has passed this way before you. In the first part you are disguised as a spacetrucker who must search a robot space-station, in the second you trans-mat down to the planet Glacia which is rather cold and has igloos and things, in the third you take a kind of Westworld holiday on the planet Vacatia, and in the fourth a submarine provides you with one or two problems.



As you might guess from the above *Ludoids* is a curious adventure. Each part has full screen pictures at a number of locations, many of which are rather evocative and pleasing. A few of these pictures have simple animation such as clouds rolling by, a burger sliding out of a food dispenser on a tray and beacons flashing. The character set has been tastefully redefined being both futuristic and readable. It's a shame the whole lot, pictures and text scrolls off, but on the whole the game is attractively presented. What is remarkable is the short length of each part. This may be partly due to the machine code introduction sequences which greet each mini-adventure, which are delightful in themselves, but surely cannot explain the brevity of the adventures which follow.

Your overall mission is to find the Ludoids and destroy their trans-mat jammers with the wrist detector given to you at the beginning. Many of the pictures, like that of a Sinclair C5 seen early on, are very impressive but the plot that links them together is flat-footed and it wouldn't take much from any adventurer to complete the whole four parts within one afternoon. It's not as if the codewords you need to carry on from one part to another create much of a challenge. At the beginning of part two the following gem comes up onto the screen:- 'If you found the key behind the desk you will have been able to find the codeword that you need'. The codeword for part three, hidden within part two, is somewhat obvious as it is highlighted by an arrow leading from the word HINT. Since this adventure clearly won't take much solving by anyone, I suppose you could say it's the gourmet equivalent of boil-in-the-bag for the adventurer who is too busy to play adventures.

One of the most interesting parts of the game, and certainly the most difficult, is the gun duel in the western world of Vacatia. To draw your gun and then fire it with a different key is very difficult in the split second allowed you by your opponent. Your first few efforts will no doubt see you biting the dust.

Ludoids is a curious piece of software as it comes in four parts, each of which is very short and very easy. There are a number of machine code routines to bring the adventure alive and there are many worthy pictures. It is hard to see what attraction the game would offer to hardened adventurers but it may offer some entertainment for the adventure dabbler or the young at heart.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy
2Graphics: rather good
Presentation: good
Input facility: a little beyond verb/noun
Response: fast
General rating: unusual

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	6
Logic	6
Addictive quality	7
Overall	6

Let's begin this month's SIGNSTUMPS with the kind of help offered by that curious but much apreciated band of adventurers who delight in a bit of philanthropy — who like helping stranded adventurers on their merry way (or in other words prevent damage to computer, cat, teamug out of sheer frustration, not to mention saving the odd marriage).

K D Stobley ***very kindly offers help for a query set in Issue 21. He guides us all with the following***
'I read *Dazed and Confused* by David Salter: well let's see if we can give him a hand with *El Dorado* from Atlantis. At the beginning you come across an unlit torch stave, some flint and some pigmies. Take the torch and flint and USBEF SPTBSZ CFBET with pygmies: they will give you a spear. When you get to the deep valley MPPL through DSFFQFST and you will find a cave. Next MJHIU TUBWF using GMJOU and enter cave. Go up and have a good look around. You'll come across a jaguar. UISPX TQFBS at jaguar, then you will find a hemp rope and a cylindrical stone baton with a wooden handle. You take both of these. When you get to the ledge the other side of the cave just past the python called Monty UJF SPQF to saplings and climb down, where you will come across the statue.'
I must stop there otherwise the man from Atlantis will have my guts for garters.

Stephen Browne ***from Belfast is another helpful soul and responds to a plea in Issue 21 thus:***
'. . . about killing the dragon in *Twin Kingdom Valley*. You will need the long wooden TUBGG which lies behind the TJMWFS EPPS in the desert king's castle. 'Ah! That's all very well', I hear you cry, 'but where do you get the TJMWFS key?' Well, you give the EJBNPOE to the forest king and he will give you an amulet. When you have this go to the witch in the dungeon and give her the DSZTUBM CBMM, she will give you the bronze key. Now go to the bronze door in the short passage, open it and a princess will flee out.'
Stephen goes on with the exact solution but I think we'll leave it there and say that you are near to getting the wooden staff needed to do the job.

S Swann ***in Mid Glamorgan offers some corrections for (no doubt, my own) faults in the November issue regarding*** *The Fourth Protocol:*
'First of all, you can obtain the files from Blenheim at any time at all. Secondly, in hint no. 11 it is UMEA in Sweden, not UMBA as stated. Now a hint. When you have eliminated most of the people in the three lists, MOD, CABINET and FOREIGN you will be left with the following names: E Havers, T Allen, D Faulkner, R Night, A Sopwith. Forget Havers and Night, they are totally harmless. With the right amount of investigation you will eliminate Sopwith and Allen. Make sure you do investigate them as it improves your prestige. This leaves us with Faulkner. Watch him and his eating habits, he's your traitor.'

Let's kick off my help bit with an easy one. Mark Malone ***in Lancs wants to know how to beat that dart throwing gremlin in the first scene from the Adventure International classic. GFUDI the LOJGF from the ESBX in the kitchen and go back up and kill the gremlin. In the same adventure*** Mark Rose ***of Herts asks*** 'I have the flashlight and the camera but I cannot use them'. ***MJHIU the flashlight and QPTU it in the NBJMCPY. Press CVUUPO on the camera to scare the gremlins.***

'Can you please tell me where the last touchstone is in the game *Robin of Sherwood, Touchstones of Rhiannon*' ***writes*** Stuart Clarke ***from Cheshire. The gold coins are found in the DIFTU, in TBDLT in Gregory's cart (and in the TUBUVF as stated in a past 'post). Take the touchstones collected to the TUPOF DJSDMF and drop them and the TJMWFS BSSPX. Herne will appear and change the TJMWFS BSSPX into a touchstone.***

'In *Tower of Despair* how do you get past the demonkin which come after you when you leave the grounds of the building you start in?' ***asks*** Robert Sharpe. ***NPVOU horse and ride FBTU.***

Here are quite a few questions on Mikrogen's *Witch's Cauldron* ***from*** Vicky Mahlberg ***in Bath:***
'How do I deal with the fierce dragon guarding the treasure? And how do I open the south door in the room with the signs on the wall? How do I get past the wall of flame without burning to death?'
To kill the dragon you will need help from the MJPO. Answer 'No' to the MJPO'T question and he will allow you to cut his hair with the knife. To open the south door go to the room with the TLFMFUPO. Here take a CPOF to make a skeleton key. Put out the GJSF with NBHJD EVTU.

Kenneth Fraser ***has a problem with*** *Eye of Bain*, ***where he's got the jar of oil, the ruby and the shiny cross but can't light the wood. PJM MFWFS, pull MFWFS by coffin. To pass shapeless beast carry SVCZ and say 'GJSF'. On the same game*** H J Maton ***writes*** 'I have been playing this game for months but as yet I have only been able to visit the first 22 locations. So far I have the shovel, bucket, pole, dagger, honey and whipping post . . . . . the nasty nomad keeps killing me'. ***To kill desert nomad, UISPX EBHHFS then examine slaves. Give IPOFZ to bear. In the top of the tower enter with UJF WJOF. You also have a query with*** *Golden Apple* ***and thanks to*** J Duncan ***I can answer it. The parrot says 'To be or not to be, that is the answer.' At the computer in the computer room UZQF KC. The screen lights up and you get some jewelry.***

Gavin Burr ***of Warwick asks*** 'How do you get past the customs official at the airport in Urban Upstart?' ***Give GJWFS and official QBQFST to the officer.***

Stephen Greenslade ***in West Glamorgan needs some help with*** *Planet of Death* ***which was Adventure A in the famous early Artic series.***
'I've got the mirror and I've also got the key, but can you tell me how do you use the computer, the key and the mirror?' ***Use LFZ when in the large IBOHBS to open the locked door to the lift control room. Use the mirror to destroy the GPSDFGJF ME, then you can EBODF through it. To use computer UZQF IFMQ at keyboard.***

Jenny Fallover ***in Herts says*** 'In *Mountains of Ket* the ogre always kills me. What do I need to be able to play dice?' ***Before QMBZ EJDF with ogre save game on tape and re-load if lose. You'll find the answers to your other queries in previous SIGNPOSTS.***

ENCRYPTION CORNER

It's easy to speak Brewster!

ENGLISH:	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
BREWSTER:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
ENGLISH:	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y
BREWSTER:	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

BEYOND SLIP BEHIND

Dear Derek
Having finished *Sorderon's Shadow* before you even reviewed it, in fact even before you acknowledged its existence in the November issue of CRASH, we feel that we deserve some recognition.

The game is good and enjoyable to play, with the usual high quality graphics from Beyond and the advantage of text. Most of the problems are straightforward, being complicated only by the immense distances between consecutive tasks and a very finicky command requirement in some instances — despite the claimed 750 words vocabulary.

On the negative side there appears to be a lot of useless items lying around that are no use at all and often cannot be taken or used. There are also several locations marked on the map that don't exist, these take the form of pits and windmills (windmills of your mind perhaps). Unfortunately huts and igloos are graphically identical as are castles and towers. Character interaction also has its disadvantages; they invariably won't do what you want and when they do it is a painstaking task to get them anywhere, as you have to direct both yourself and them at each go. Occasionally whole groups of them follow you which reduces the game to an absurd crawl.

Your energy level is controlled mainly by resting at night (which causes the moon to scoot across the screen — a feature that kept us amused throughout) and not by eating as they say. There are loads of characters, many of which don't move and others of which are pointless. The cryptic clues you receive as the game unfolds are often parodies of the outline of tasks set out in the booklet. However, some are more taxing.

The game is generally slow, but some arcade type skills are needed to begin with, to follow the guide, and at the end to catch Sorderon as he tries to escape. The SAVE facility is as



useful as ever but takes almost as long as the game takes to load and requires verification which gnaws at the patience a bit. The final message once you've defeated Sorderon is good, but unfortunately it moves too fast to read completely except the last part which is: 'We praise you slayer of the evil reign, Sorderon's death and Watchers bane, Now good will rule for ever more, In this land of Elindor'.
Game Play.
As soon as the game starts, follow Morrin north to the cave in Balinor. After he speaks 'Elin Balor', enter ELIN BALOR directly into the keyboard (all magic words should be entered without verb or quotes). Whenever you find a gold coin take it. Greet Lonar, go east and kill Krillan. Return to the village of Balinor and note the message Srom Kasoba. Leave village and take Urn of Perception. Travel south and take Eternal Flame. Go west to the Ring of Supral. Drop urn at midnight. Take the Eye of Togar and travel west to Lord Supral's Tower. Take Horseshoe of Zephyr. Return to village of Balinor and offer horseshoe to Tannor. He will take you to the hut of Nolidor. Take prism. Travel to the wells at Bagul. Stand at the well containing the shiny object. Use prism. Prince Hydral will appear and give you the Phial of Healing. Go to the lake in Kirrin and stand at the lake containing the shiny object. Use prism. Amican will appear and offer you the Bow of Borak.
Garry Bishop and Pete White,
Exeter.

This is only half of this intrepid pair's solution . . . I may well publish the rest next month. This will no doubt lead to an outcry of 'stop giving the whole game away' but I think Sorderon's Shadow ***is only a filler for the gap in the*** Midnight ***Trilogy and this is how it will be regarded in this column.***

DB

D&D AND SWORDS AND SORCERY

Dear Derek
Have you noticed recently how the line 'and darkness descended upon the land' seems to crop up with monotonous regularity in software intros, eg *Nightshade*, *Runes of Zendos* and probably plenty more.

The reason I mention this obscure fact is to illustrate how boring and repetitive scenarios are becoming. This is surprising when you consider the wealth of material available, eg science fiction & fantasy novels, films, plays and so on that games designers can choose from.

Another thing that has disappointed me is the scarcity of real (graphically) dungeon & dragon type adventures. When I packed away my Dungeon Master and Players Handbooks I was under the impression that superbly graphical ghouls, trolls, and the like would be leaping out unexpectedly on my brave adventurer. However, as you know, these type of games have not occurred, which is very disappointing to thousands of people like myself. Not all software houses are to blame — a few have made very good attempts to introduce these types of games: Mizar with *Out of the Shadows*, Beyond with the *Midnight* Trilogy and recently, The Edge with *Fairlight*.

If other readers of CRASH were to express their views on this subject I believe you will find they generally agree with my conclusions, which may therefore steer adventure designers in the correct direction.

As Mikrogen have shown, the memory limitations of the Spectrum can be overcome to include all of the ideas put forward. The possibilities of further add on scenarios is limitless.

To close, I would like software houses to seriously look at some of these ideas — and others from readers. The market is ripe for exploitation, so someone come and take it (and get rich at the same time).
R Rex, Sheffield.

Funny you should say these things, I was discussing this very same point only the other day with someone who was asking why dungeons and dragons had not been transferred to the computer. And you know the answer is remarkably simple — D&D is a social game where a few fantasy nuts get together around a table and live out fantasy roles through their characters. Computer games, whether we like it or not, have become a solitary pastime and software houses are not interested in what is seen as a minority market, ie multi-player role games.

As for critising software houses, well, here you're onto a complete loser. It's hard to argue with a software house releasing things like Monty Mole Part Eleven ***when it is making a great deal of money. Compare this to a rival software house which tries something a little different involving many months of development only to get their fingers burnt.*** Swords & Sorcery ***from PSS took an awfully long time to develop compared to a platform game. It was begun during those days when programmers were prepared to offer the public something new and companies were prepared to market new ideas. But will this game recoup at the till all the man hours put into it? Only time will tell.***

DB

SWAMPED WITH A THESAURUS

Dear Derek
Why must every new adventure nowadays have a full sentence analyser, independent characters and a text window? Unless these features are very well done they tend to detract from the game as a whole. Take *Sherlock* for example. This claims a vocabulary of 800 words, but if the programmers had spent time entering words which the user may input, instead of ridiculous words such as 'fairly' which no-one would input, the program would seem more real and less stupid. By the way, try typing 'SAY TO ME, TELL ME ABOUT ME' for a laugh.

I think your review of *Adventureland* was a bit harsh. You gave *Hulk* a SMASH but even though the graphics aren't as good, *Adventureland* has far better puzzles and locations. But reviews are only a matter of opinion and so I can't blame you too much for having lousy taste!

Why has no-one heard of Delta 4's *Return of the Joystick*. It is a great diversion but I am stuck. If anyone out there has got a copy, how do I get past the locked door in Software Project's office? Help!
Alex Marsh, Billericay, Essex

I think the point you make about sentence analysis is an interesting one, and it's a subject I've written on in the past. Personally, I see nothing wrong with inventing a restricted subset of English for adventures, and see convoluted sentence input as an amusing diversion only. I'd rather think the author who designed the game was the intelligent one as opposed to looking for intelligence from the computer.

As for reviews I may well have lousy taste but it would seem so has just about everyone else. No, seriously, I write reviews for the people who I think read the reviews. A CRASH Smash denotes a game people will want to buy for whatever reason. I would strongly recommend people to read all of a review and not just the marks, as even a good review will contain detailed criticism including specific unfavourable points.

As for Return of the Joystick, ***my review copy didn't load and obtaining a replacment copy is one of those things I didn't quite get round to doing. Incidentally,*** The Never Ending Story ***isn't reviewed this month for a similar reason. With its special loader it failed to load on a combination of four cassette recorders and three computers so if you have the same problem don't accept the rubbish from the likes of Smiths that it must be OK because it loads in their shop!***

DB

CUT-THROAT HOLIDAY

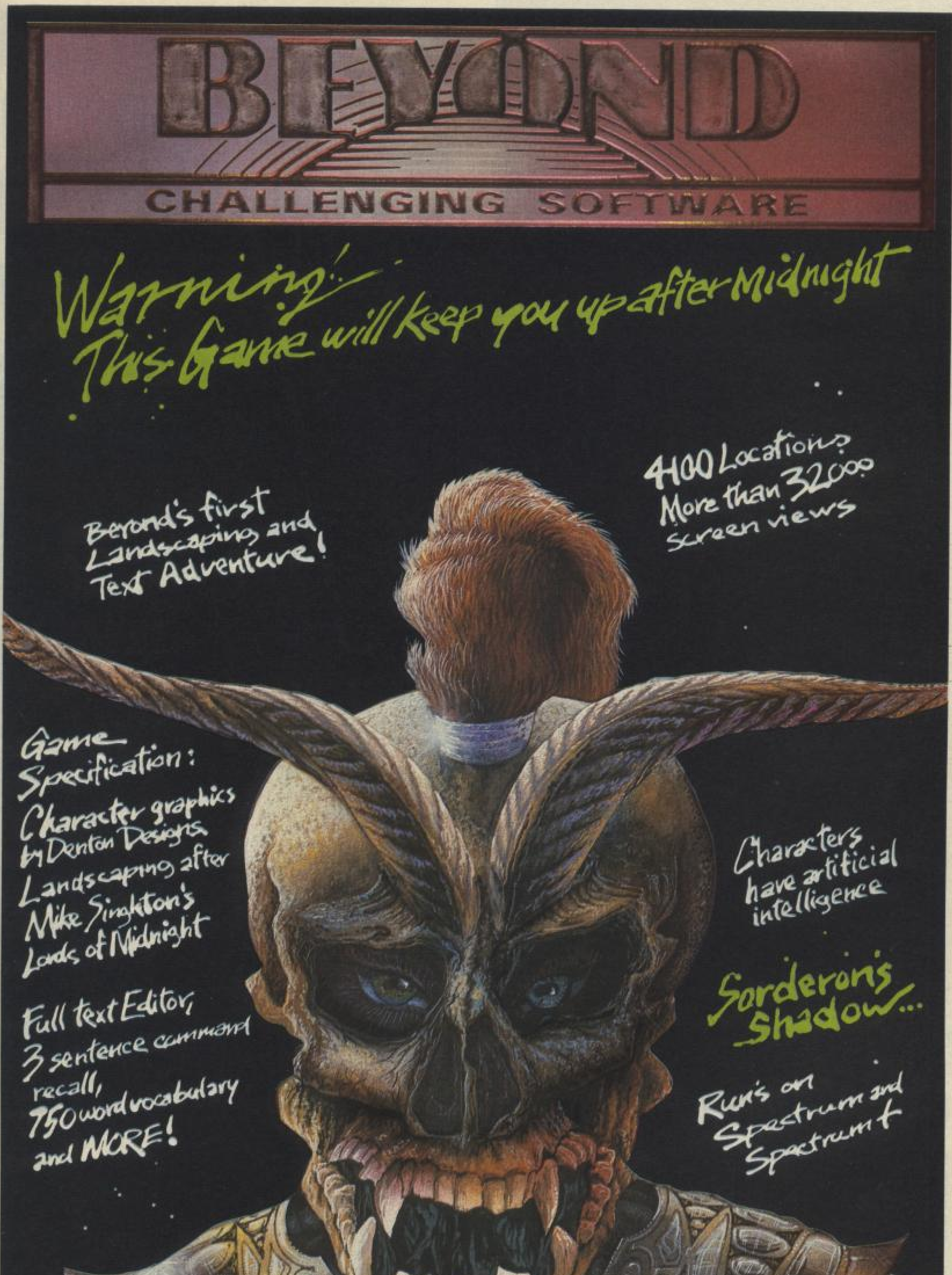
Dear Derek
I bought *Terrormolinos* last week and had finished it on playing the second evening (95%). It is so ridiculously easy — almost just a case of taking photos in the right locations. It's all very well having tremendous graphics but this game has cost me nearly £4 an evening and I, for one, am very disappointed. *Hampstead* had me scratching my head for months, and whereas the humour was rather subtle in that game, *Terrormolinos* is too heavy-handed and crude — but then that's the idea I suppose.
Anne Borland, Canvey Island,
Essex

Terrormolinos ***is a very easy adventure right enough — I had a huge mailbag which consisted mostly of full solutions to the holiday romp. If*** Terrormolinos ***introduced more people to the dubious delights of adventuring perhaps this might not be such a bad thing (I think!).***

DB

S·U·P·E·R·H·E·R·O·E·S

You know how I said how I'd wished I had seen the film when I reviewed Gremlins? Well it's the same thing here — I wish I'd seen Never Ending Story so I could understand the message Christopher Jenkins of Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan received on completing the computer game from Ocean (explaining why I couldn't find the time to see the film at my local cinema would be my never ending story). Christopher writes "I have completed *Never Ending Story* on November 2nd at 5.31 pm after receiving it in the morning. The message was — The Empress congratulates you on surviving the Nothing and Succeeding in your quest to return Aurym to her, but most of all for making Bastion believe in Fantasia. Now that someone from the real world believes in it Fantasia can be restored. Bastion, Atreyu and Falkor set off to begin rebuilding Fantasia".



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THE COMPETITION WHICH REACHES PARTS OF PROGRAMMERS THAT OTHER MAGAZINES DAREN'T PRINT!



STEVE TURNER ANDY BRAYBROOK

Courtesy of Andrew Hewson's Camerawork, we have a picture of two evil programming types to put in a mini Rogues' Gallery on this page. The Art Department, in a fairly typically vicious mood, took a scalpel to the mugshots, snipped them into little tiny pieces and then selected nine segments to stick down across the way. Over there, on that page to my right. Gottem? Good. Now get back to reading this . . .

If you reckon you're super brill when it comes to identifying people from a tiny fragment of ear or a bijou piecette of chin, then you're bound to score in this competition. Even if you're not the Hercule Poirot of photofit, you can always steal the family magnifying glass and spend an afternoon poring over the ugly mugshots on this page . . . Could prove lucrative.

Thirty lucky winner types will receive a Hewson Spectrum Goodie Bag containing the CRASH SMASHED (*It's that Kidd fellow you know, he insists I use that term* — **COMP MINION**) DRAGONTORC, LEGEND OF AVALON and TECHNICIAN TED. And just because SOUTHERN BELLE (84%) and ASTRO CLONE (88%) weren't Smashes, doesn't mean you don't want them, now does it? So you could get them too, in the prize package, which is worth a few pennies short of forty quid. You could be the envy of your friends. All you've got to do is decide how the nine little bits of programmer photo reproduced over there match up to the big photos of Steve Turner and Andy Braybrook over here.

The scalpel wielding fiend up in Art who dreamt this little number up has been very careful, you will notice, to avoid including tell-tale bits like moustaches and glasses in the nine segments. So get your thinking caps on, and pencils out.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMMER's PHOTOFIT ENTRY FORM

(Or "You can't con me, oh scalpel wielding fiend" dept)

On the right is a grid, which corresponds to the layout of the nine little bits of picture printed above. All you've got to do is decide which bit of photo belongs to Steve and mark it with a giant "S" and then mark the bits that belong to Andy with an equally large "A". Complete the name and address bit of the coupon, and whizz it off to HEWSONS BITTY BITS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January 1986.

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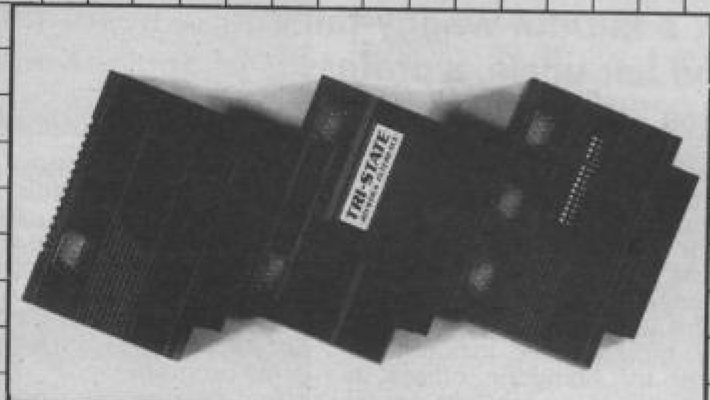
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AND THEN THERE IS LEGLESS O'DONNELL ...

Roger Kean (on loan from ZZAP!) pokes about into an enigmatic mystery at Hewson Consultants that involves a drunken reporter, a faithful waggy-tail dog, a beautiful girl and her uncle, a professor of ancient antiquities.

If ever you thought that writing a computer game today is a simple matter of getting out your compiler and squeezing some BASIC into a 42K pint pot of code, then a visit to Hewson Consultants might be salutory. For tucked away inside their (near to) Abingdon offices in Oxfordshire is a programmer by the name of **Mark Goodall** who is deeply engrossed in the mystery of the Sphinx. At least he is at the moment, for *Sphinx* is the working title of a forthcoming Hewson Consultants graphic adventure. By the time of its release — some six months away yet — its name will undoubtedly have changed, the reasons for which, Mark explains:

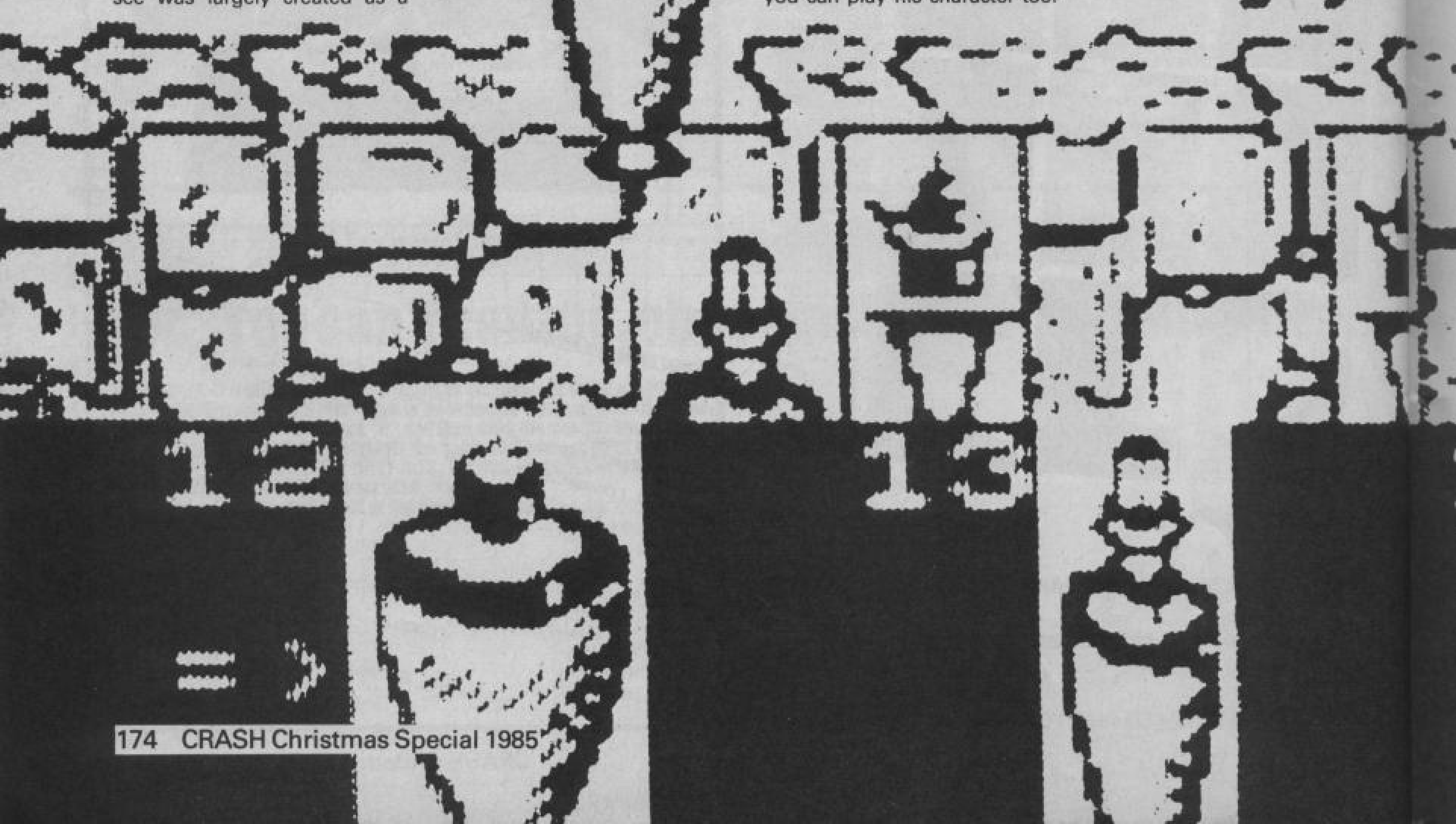
'It was originally set in Egypt — we started off with this idea of Egypt being a fruitful inspirational area — but is now set in South America partly because Egypt has been done to death as far as mystery is concerned and with this game it's the mystery that we were looking for.'

Another six months may seem like a long time, but Mark has already put hundreds of hours in, and what I was able to see was largely created as a demo in his purpose built graphics designer/editor. This amazing piece of software underlines Mark's skills as a utilities designer, something he has been doing in-house for Andrew Hewson for a while now. *Sphinx*, however, is his first ever game program.

Andrew Hewson: 'This project has been up in the air since Christmas when we kicked around a lot of ideas and gradually we pulled together what we were aiming for. Mark's written a lot of background software, there's been a great deal of talking, so once we get the idea right we'll be able to turn out several games in a series quite quickly. This is the turning point now, where the actual format is worked out and we've got the utilities worked out and we've got everything worked out except the sound generator. The graphics are important because obviously it's the graphics that have to transfer the impact of the game to the player.

'What's happening now is that we're getting the storyline together. We've got somebody working on the script and he has a brief to write 10,000 words on it. He uses phases like 'literary induction' which we were very impressed with. It's a tremendous script. He also provided us with the idea to have a separate motivation for each of the characters so for instance the reporter is there to make money to finance his drinking! It's a multi-character game, something like Scooby Do the cartoon, where four people in some sense work together to finish the job. The individual characters are important. The team consists of Daphne, the whimsical female who screams and runs away from everything. She's very slim and elegant so she can nip into tight corners and she is the one whose family is cursed and it is the curse that they are trying to release. Then there is Legless O'Donnell, the drunken reporter who is fat, heavy and gets drunk. He's the strong one but if you let him get drunk he becomes unmanageable, *Trashman*'s done that and it's the same sort of philosophy. Spot is the dog and you can play his character too. He's the one used for frightening away the nasty bones that come and get you. Finally, there's the archaeologist who is an upright sort who can't do anything useful except that when he sees a hieroglyphic he goes up and reads it.'

Mark Goodall takes up the story as he shows me not only the animated characters and their 3-dimensional environment, but also how the graphics editor works, scrolling predesigned 'building blocks' through four selection windows, while a cursor allows him to drop them in the top display area wherever he chooses. 'Obviously the characters can only do what comes most natural to them, as with the dog he is terribly good at digging, and by kicking great piles of sand around it's possible to retrieve some important item like a chain or a bone — but he won't be able to do anything with it. If it's a question of using a key in a lock, when that's needed you change control over to another character. Similarly, you can use the reporter to lift heavy objects up, the archaeologist to read inscriptions and so on. It's partly fun, partly mystery and partly just watching the graphics.

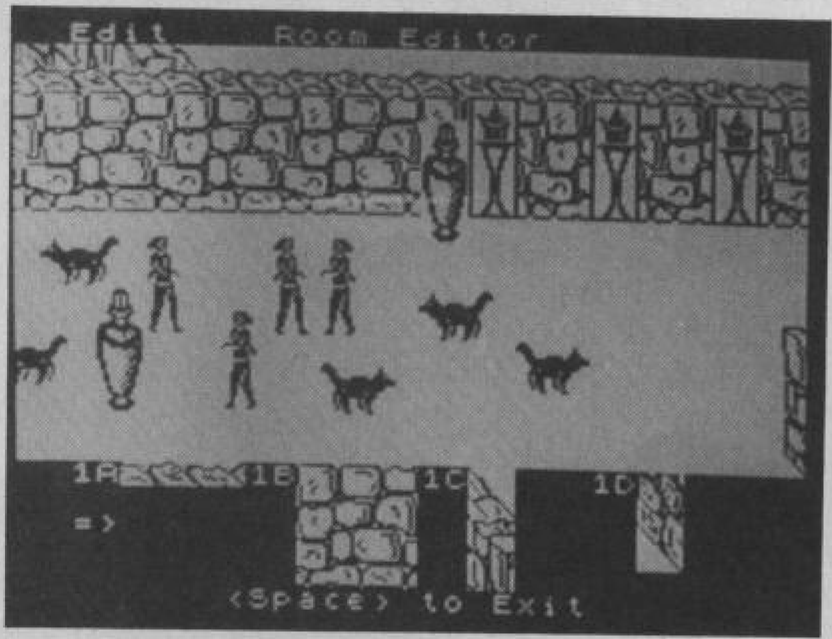


'We've tried to introduce a horror element to the graphics. The way they've turned out they tend to be ultra-realistic so the actual design of the game gives the possibility of horror inherent within the idea of realism. So, if we can make a player believe that they are that character then if we have some horrible thing emerging from a wall or a mummy suddenly shooting out, getting hold of somebody and ripping his arms off and throwing bits of body everywhere, then that is going to make more impact on the player.'

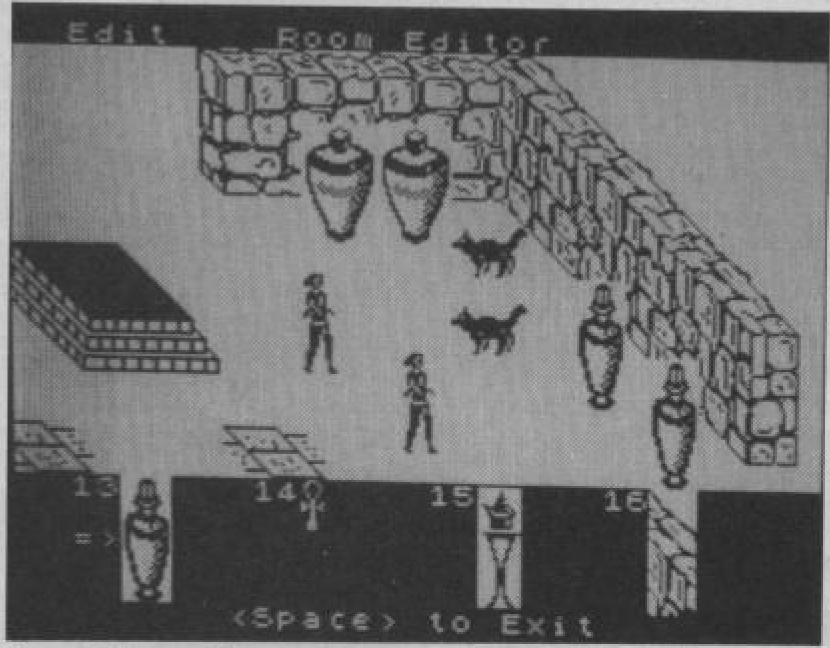
Mark's relish at the thought of this kind of mayhem is mitigated somewhat by his obviously honest face, but Andrew hurries the subject on by telling me that the 'key phrase' to the game is 'littered plain'. Each level in the game (there may be many) can in theory be virtually infinite in size. This would obviously make it unplayable, so Mark is aiming to have spacious open areas, and then claustrophobic spaces. Within the Egyptian/Aztec temple areas where the action will take place, they have literally littered the playing plain with buildings, walls, jars, and other appropriately archaeological artifacts. Among them statues which, since they are constructed along identical lines to the playing characters, can be brought to life in an instant, using the same animation routines as the main characters and therefore eating up no memory — a touch of Mark's 'horror'.

'The system we're using is so flexible it's hopeful that we can proportion out these claustrophobic parts and open out some locations and then close them down again, so if you were going down wells or holes we perhaps could get lots of contrast.'

All of this is seen in 3D from a bird's eye point of view, the



Mark Goodall's graphics designer/editor system, here shows various units of pre-designed wall (lower part of screen), which can be cursor-driven and placed in the scrolling display area at the top, thus allowing the building up of a vast 'littered plain'.



Some of the graphics we may expect to see in the finished game, including the archaeologist's beautiful daughter, Spot the dog and some useful jars that may contain something nasty . . .

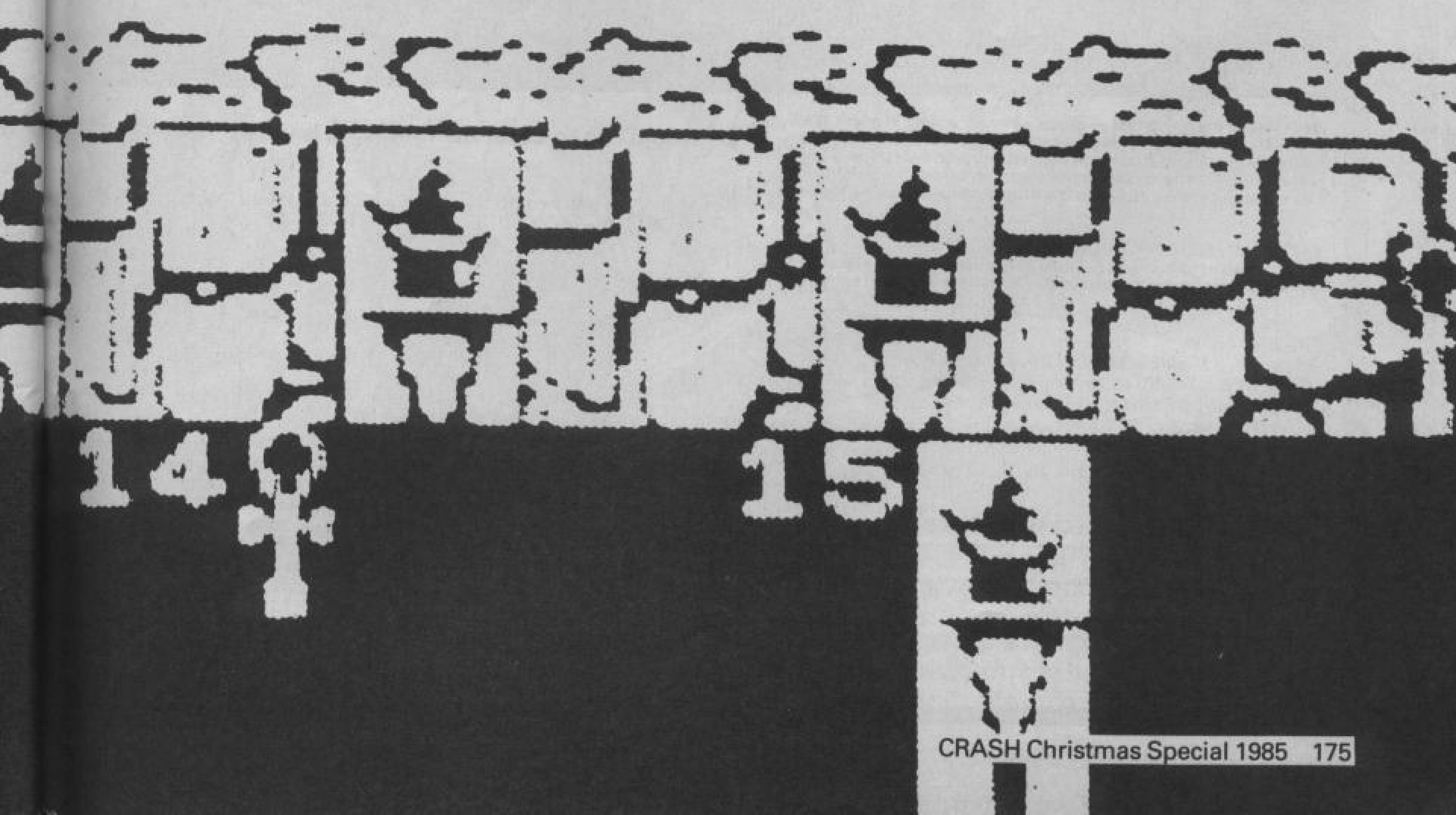
problems of which Mark is presently coping with. 'There's so many ways of approaching the problem. For example here we've got a forty-five degree angle as a perspective angle for these objects. Now it turns out that the implications of that are rather awkward and I'll have to change it to a twenty-two and a half degree angle of perspective and there are so many problems like this which need to be chewed over.'

As the characters move about, they pass behind objects and buildings, so all the moving graphics have to be masked correctly to make it appear as though they really are passing behind something, and there are quite a few moving characters, and on top of that, the screen scrolls about all over the place. 'It's actually quite difficult,' says Mark. 'We've finally solved the problems now but keeping the speed up is very difficult and requires some very peculiar bits of coding which I spent most of last week trying to sort out to make sure it is fast. Also you're moving quite a large area of the screen here as well. The actual area of the screens is very large and with all this it's obviously quite a challenge.'

Writing any computer game with this complexity of graphics and character interaction is a challenge, but as one of the new generation of Hewson programmers, Mark Goodall seems cheerful enough at the daunting prospect, and if, through the strains of work, he ever feels in need of some convivial drinking company, there's always Legless O'Donnell . . .

Hewson Consultants' *Sphinx* (or whatever it's finished title will be) should be available round May to June — more detail when we have it.

ROGER (ON LOAN) KEAN



ZX SPECTRUM

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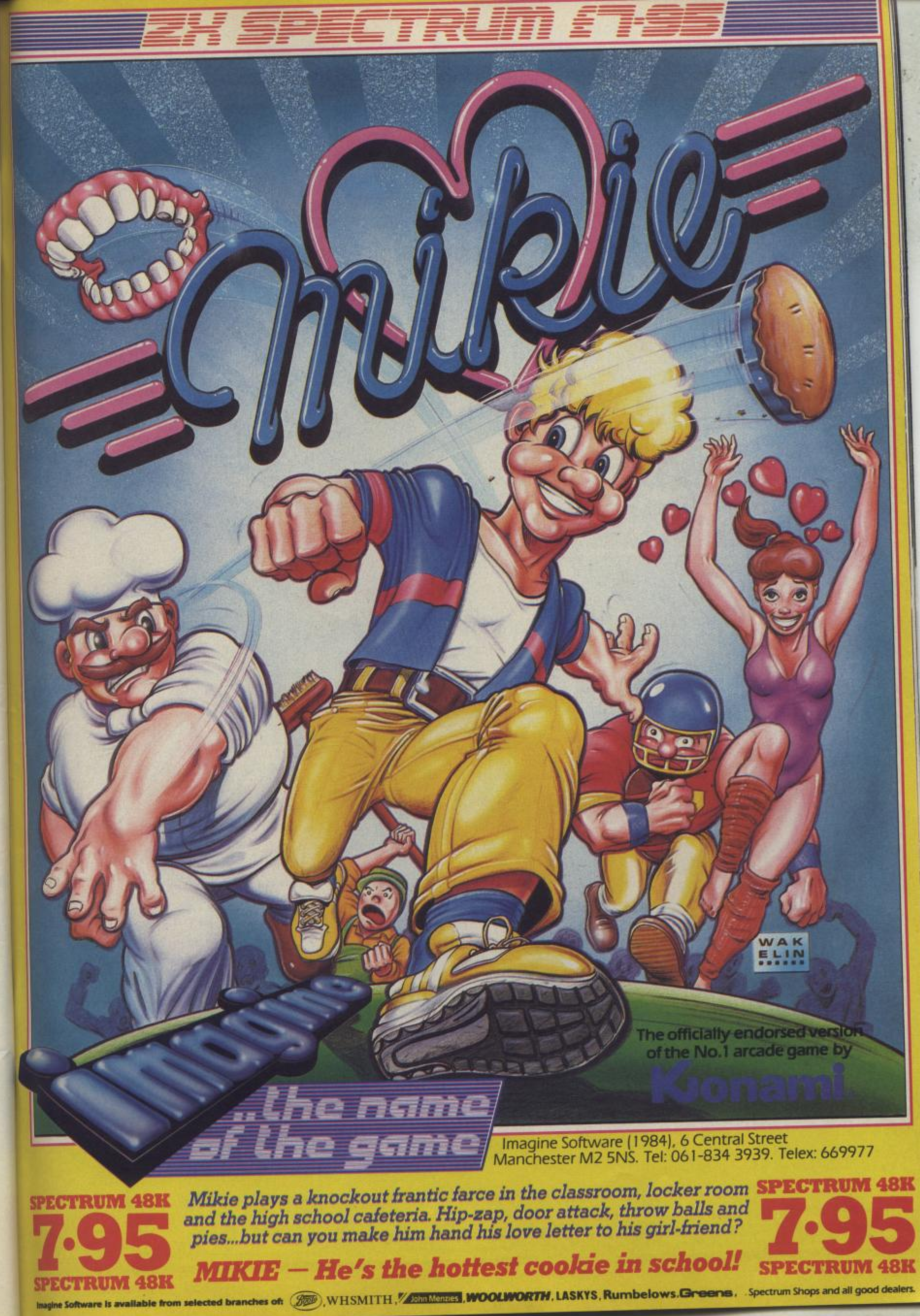
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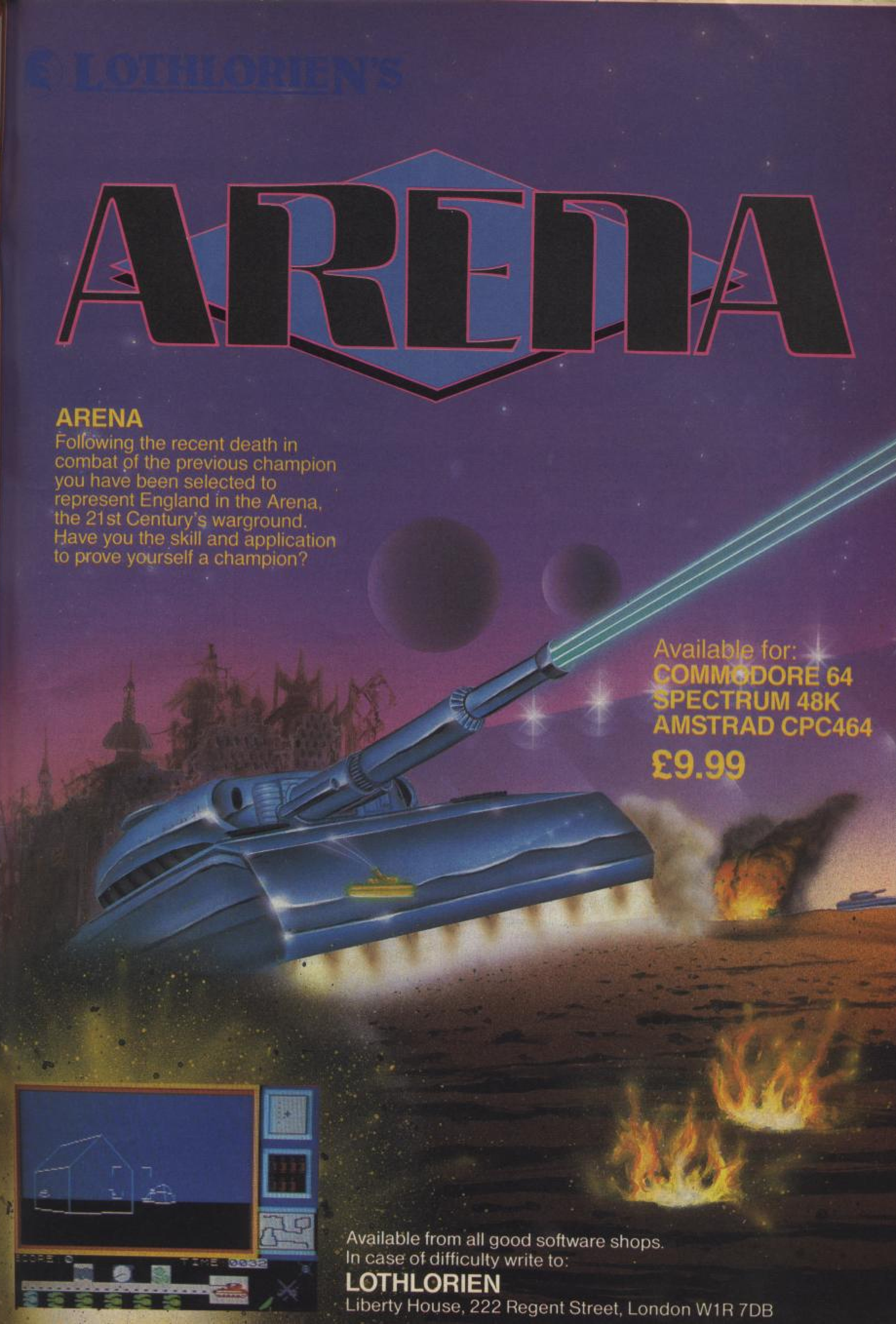
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FRONTLINE

AUSTERLITZ

Producer: Lothlorien
Retail price: **£9.95**

Imagine a cold December morning in 1807. Around 150,000 men are gathered on the field of battle before some of the most powerful leaders of Europe — and you have *Austerlitz*, Lothlorien's successor to *Waterloo* in their solo Warmaster series.

The packaging for *Austerlitz* is the same 'video case' affair that graced their previous effort. Inside the beautiful case, there's the usual manual and cassette. I was given photostats of the manual pages, as the finished booklet has not yet gone to print. However, as with *Waterloo*, the finished instructions will be in a slim, glossy A5 size booklet. In fact, much of the layout and text has been lifted from the previous game, as both use the same rules system.

The manual provides all the details on the mechanics of play, historical notes to accompany the game itself and character sketches of Napoleon's Corps Commanders (a brilliant idea which unfortunately couldn't be incorporated in *Waterloo*). All the instructions are clear and concise and within minutes of reading them you should be able to begin the game.

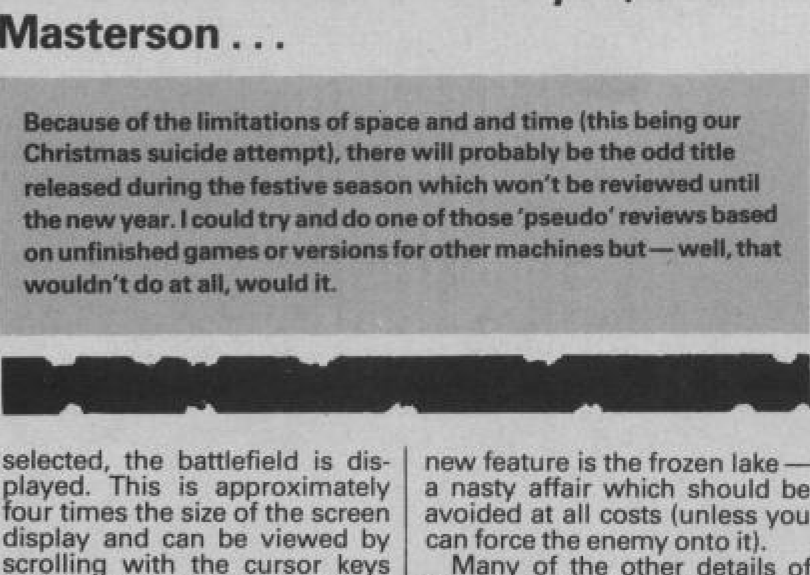
Austerlitz has three levels of difficulty. The first is a training level to allow you to become accustomed to the game. If you are familiar with the system (as I was after playing *Waterloo* for ages), this level fails to provide serious competition. However, do not under-estimate the difficulty of other levels. The second is the standard game which takes some time to achieve a good result on, but the third alters some of the setup conditions pertaining to the efficiency of the Austro-Russian forces (otherwise known as the computer), in order to create a very difficult situation for the French.

Once the game level has been selected, the battlefield is displayed. This is approximately four times the size of the screen display and can be viewed by scrolling with the cursor keys (making use of a scrolling routine that would grace many an arcade game, at that). The player's units (French) are displayed in blue whilst the Austro-Russians are shown in yellow. Terrain features are simply, but adequately defined and the only new feature is the frozen lake — a nasty affair which should be avoided at all costs (unless you can force the enemy onto it).

After last month's little mistakette (something to do with the way in which Leprechaun was spelt), we'll keep the introduction brief. Over to you, Sean Masterson . . .

Because of the limitations of space and and time (this being our Christmas suicide attempt), there will probably be the odd title released during the festive season which won't be reviewed until the new year. I could try and do one of those 'pseudo' reviews based on unfinished games or versions for other machines but — well, that wouldn't do at all, would it.

Many of the other details of the game come directly from its predecessor; infantry and cavalry actions only; terrain effects on movement; unit display and movement and combat procedure. Units are displayed as character blocks with crossed swords for cavalry and a rifle for infantry. Whether or not they are Commanders is also shown, as is the Corps they belong to. If desired, unit strength and morale may be shown (although strength only is revealed for enemy units). Combat is automatic, given that one or more units have entered an enemy zone of control (one adjacent character block on any facing from an enemy unit).



The enemy's forces gather on the right of the screen. Never mind the quantity though, what about the quality?

One of the interesting ideas employed in the game is the use of limited intelligence. This is to simulate the early mists that clung to the battlefield on that December morning and added so much confusion to the battlefield. After the first turn, only those units spotted by your advanced units or those encountered before combat, are revealed. Otherwise, during the computer's turn, 'blank squares' may be seen to begin to move to simulate partial awareness of the Austro-Russian dispositions. Otherwise, you're in the dark.

Game turns consist of giving orders to all your units and then entering them in one command, to the computer. Before entering your command sequence, moves for any unit may be changed at will. French movement and combat sequences follow, after which the computer's turn takes place using the same format. It's during your movement phase that various Corps commanders may offer alternative courses of action. Indeed it may be the case that they are more fully aware of the situation in that area than you, and to begin with, their advice is extremely useful. In more sophisticated games, however, be sure to read the character sketches from the manual. On one occasion, a commander who had been involved in very heavy fighting was down to his last five hundred men when he suggested that rather than retreat to a nearby hill, as I had ordered, he could intercept a 6,000 man infantry unit. On checking the notes, they referred to him as 'incapable of individual command' but 'personally brave: wounded 34 times in combat'.

The game looks almost ident-

ical to its predecessor and its aesthetic feature are deliberately so. But as with all good wargames, the subtleties of the game are vastly different. *Austerlitz* plays well and makes an excellent addition to *Waterloo*. This is another goodie. Get it when you can.

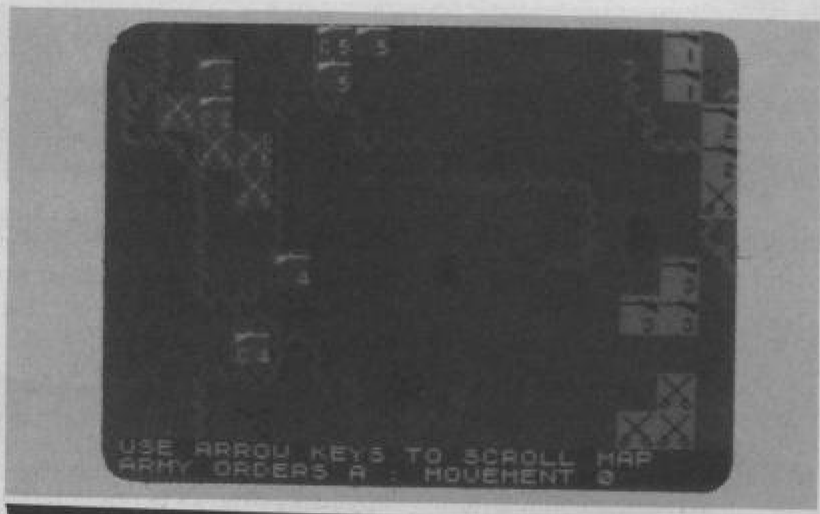
PRESENTATION 90%
Up to the standard now expected of the Warmaster series
RULES 87%
The character sketches are an excellent addition to an already superb set of rules
PLAYABILITY 87%
Very user friendly
GRAPHICS 92%
Uncluttered, appealing display
AUTHENTICITY 90%
An excellent simulation
VALUE FOR MONEY 95%
Hardly a byte of unused code
OVERALL 93%
Character sketches and limited intelligence make this better than *Waterloo*. If Lothlorien keep going like this, my ratings will not be able to do them justice

THE EVIL CROWN

Producer: Mind Games (Argus Press Software)
Retail price: **£9.99**

This one player game is all about running a Barony in feudal medieval England. It's an icon driven game which allows the modification of various factors surrounding the running of your estate. Apart from the now fashionable use of icons, the game employs some animated sequences (to depict battles and revolts) and a redesigned character set adds atmosphere to the game.

The main screen is split into two halves. On the left is an overhead view of the fields worked on by the peasantry. The cultivated areas are shown in blue, over the forest region. If the harvests are not too good, it's possible to select new areas for farming, using an arrow cursor. To the right of the screen are nine main icons which allow you to alter the tax rate, alter the toll rate for passing traders; pay scutage to the king (to avoid having to send your militia into battle for him); modify the size of the militia; give food hand outs (if the peasants are particularly poor); spend money on tournaments; check your progress; continue to the next stage of the game and quit.



Cultivated land is displayed on the left of the screen, while game icons allow you to reach other parts . . . .

All of these icons are well defined and responsive to commands. The idea is that from the first year (1156), the estate has to be managed in yearly turns. By maintaining the right balance of taxes and forces and proving yourself in the annual tournaments. The main strategy part of the game takes place in the first part of the game where the allocation of available resources is planned. The option to continue is then selected.

The first part of this section shows a repetitive sequence of animals wandering through the forest. The more creatures, the less efficient the use of labour and land. A 'go away' icon allows the scene to change to the tournament sequence. This is the only part of the game that requires physical dexterity. The player takes part in a joust, and the top half of the screen displays the riders approaching each other. The bottom half has the jousting score on the left, and a view of the oncoming knight on the right. The cursor now becomes the point of a lance, itself made to move jerkily to simulate the effects of the galloping horse. By the time the two riders meet in the centre of the screen, the point of the lance must have been guided into a position that will result in a strike against the opponent. Enough successful passes and the tournament will be won. This section is particularly difficult to master, however, so practice will be necessary.

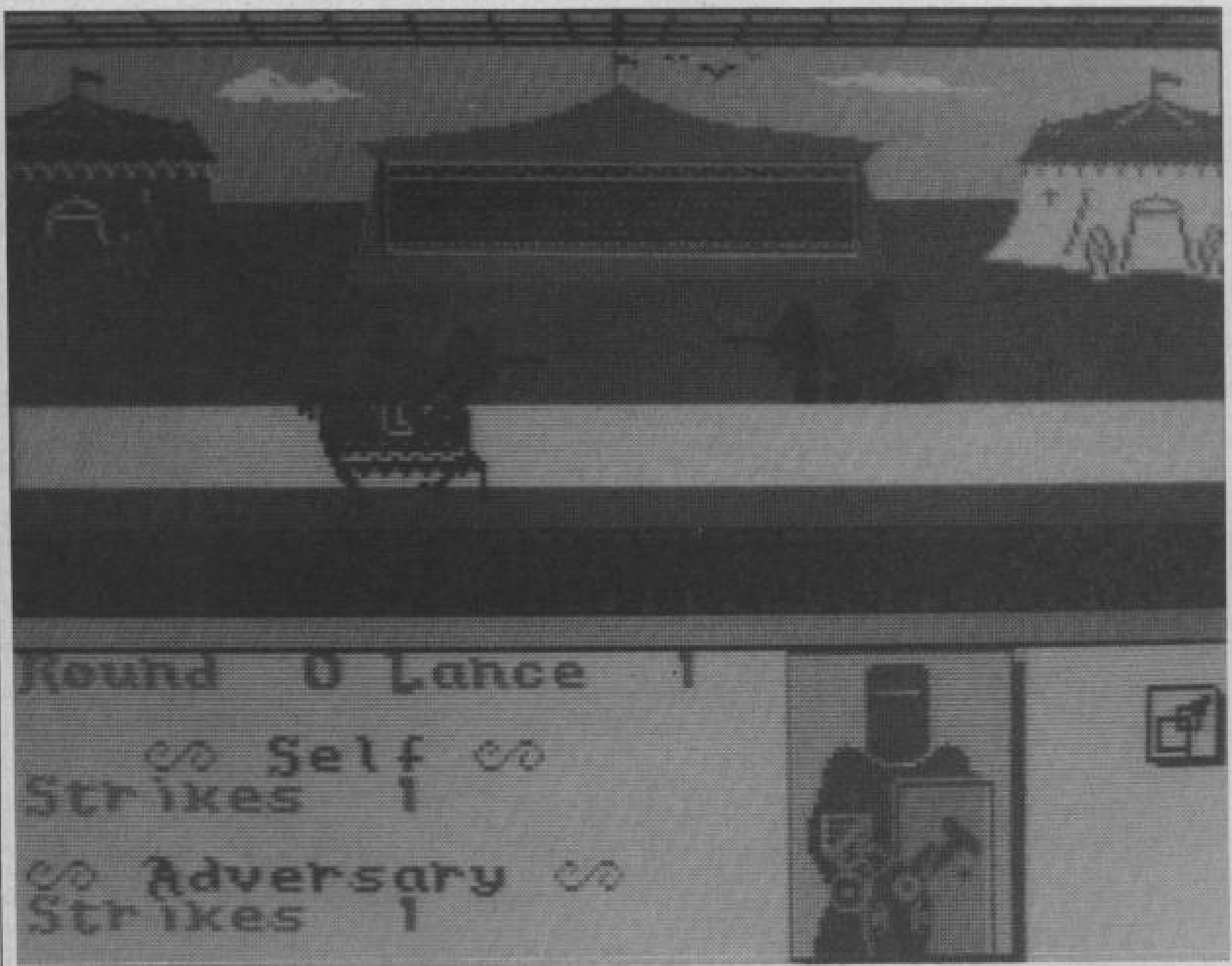
Whatever the outcome of the

FRONTLINE

tournament, the next stage of the game deals with any battles and/or revolts by the peasantry that have to be resolved. Another option, to pay the militia for their participation in these events, is provided. A simplified graphic sequence showing a couple of figures in combat is used to convey the result. The colour of the figures also reflects how large the battle is. Assuming you are not totally defeated at this point, the next screen shows the harvest result. The greater the harvest the more efficient the labour force and use of land. Random elements like the effects of weather are accounted for by animated clouds covering the sun. If all is well at this point, the game progresses to the next year.

In some ways, the instructions to the game were misleading, saying that icons would be highlighted when they were not, and they failed to explain the jousting display. Moreover, the actual quantities of money used in various aspects of the game were simply left as abstract units without any guidance as to what those units were actually calculated in.

Having said that, eventually the game mechanics become clear (before frustration with the game has mount too high) and enjoyment can be got from the different extremes of game type employed throughout the turn — from the rather exploratory nature of choosing new land for cultivation to the deadly sequence in the tournament section. The game could have been a lot better, however, had it explained the consequences of your actions. As it stands, you are left somewhat in the dark when it comes to deciding on a strategy for play. If you can handle the initial ambiguities, this could provide a stimulating and entertaining change from the conventional wargame.



The deadly jousting sequence commences. Note the window to the bottom right where your lance's position is controlled.

PRESENTATION 78%

Good use of icons with the exception that they are not highlighted as they should be for extra clarity

RULES 70%

Reasonable. Notes on the consequences of particular strategy would have been welcomed

PLAYABILITY 79%

With or without a joystick, the game is responsive and adequately designed for the beginner

GRAPHICS 80%

Some clever touches, marred slightly by occasional flickering

AUTHENTICITY 63%

By no means a historical simulation but responds well to decisions made during the game

VALUE FOR MONEY 75%

The game's structure hides a complexity that should lead to many hours' enjoyable play

OVERALL 77%

Not without its faults but a pleasantly different and thought provoking game

Lastly, I think we have the start of a Frontline Forum here. If you have something you wish do discuss about this column or indeed just have ideas you wish to air, feel free to write to me at Crash Towers. Meanwhile, Happy Christmas . . .

Dear Sean,
I read your comments on the morality of wargaming with interest. Regarding your closing statement, when playing *Theatre Europe* on a friend's Commodore, our original strategy would be to use biological or nuclear weapons on enemy cities. After a couple of games, however, we found that this would always be met with similar retaliation from the enemy and consequently, led to the destruction of our cities. Next, we tried using missiles on enemy units. The hope was that we could then win on the strength of numbers, as the computer would always send missiles back against our cities.

In the game, a city meant less to us than a unit consisting of only 1,000 men. Eventually, this war was ended in the same way as all the others — all out nuclear conflict. The only way we could come close to winning was to play a non nuclear scenario, confined to a small area of West Germany, and involving relatively little loss of life. CND have protested to PSS about the game but I agree that such games actually encourage pacifism.

JPL — No address given.

Interesting. The fact that the game you discuss is on another machine is, of course, irrelevant to the argument. However, while it's reassuring to find like minded people regarding this subject, no wargame is perfect. The apocalyptic outcome of a game like PSS's should not be regarded as inevitable — no matter how likely it may seem from the scenario. Modern war is far too complex for anything other than a superficial simulation on any home micro. As an example of a bizarre sounding and yet plausible modern war scenario, read the 'historical notes' from Game Designers Workshop's Twilight 2000.

Dear Sir,
Although I have a large number of wargames in my collection, I feel that they all lack options which others possess. I have therefore made a list of options which I think should be included in a wargame.
Every unit should have ammunition and troop status and mechanised units should have fuel status which needs to be resupplied.
Supplies should be delivered by air, land and sea. Supply convoys should have little or no combat effectiveness.
The capture of various objectives should have a direct effect on the enemy. For example, if an enemy fuel dump is captured, the captor should be able to take advantage of the situation.
Units should have varying mobility, firepower and range limitations.
When immobilised or damaged enemy units are over-run, they should be able to be repaired and utilised by the owning player. Players should be able to repair their own damaged units but not destroyed ones.
Mine laying and clearing options should be available.

I hope other micro wargamers write in until the programmers have a comprehensive list of the things we would like to see in the games. Perhaps this will encourage the development of better wargames.

Craig Rice, Colchester, Essex

I had to cut several of Craig's suggestions from the letter due to lack of space. Some of them would require extensive use of a RAM disk facility in the yet to appear Spectrum 128! But what do the rest of you think?

THE OFFICIAL 1985 INDEX

Your index to CRASH software reviews, Issues 13 to 24 inclusive, in alphabetical order by name of program. Remember, not all programs get a percentage rating (Adventure Trail, CRASH Course etc), so don't be too disappointed . . . Thanks to PAUL SADLER of Ipswich, who did the groundwork, and Gaz Sumpter of Birmingham, who missed his bus twice in the doing of this task!

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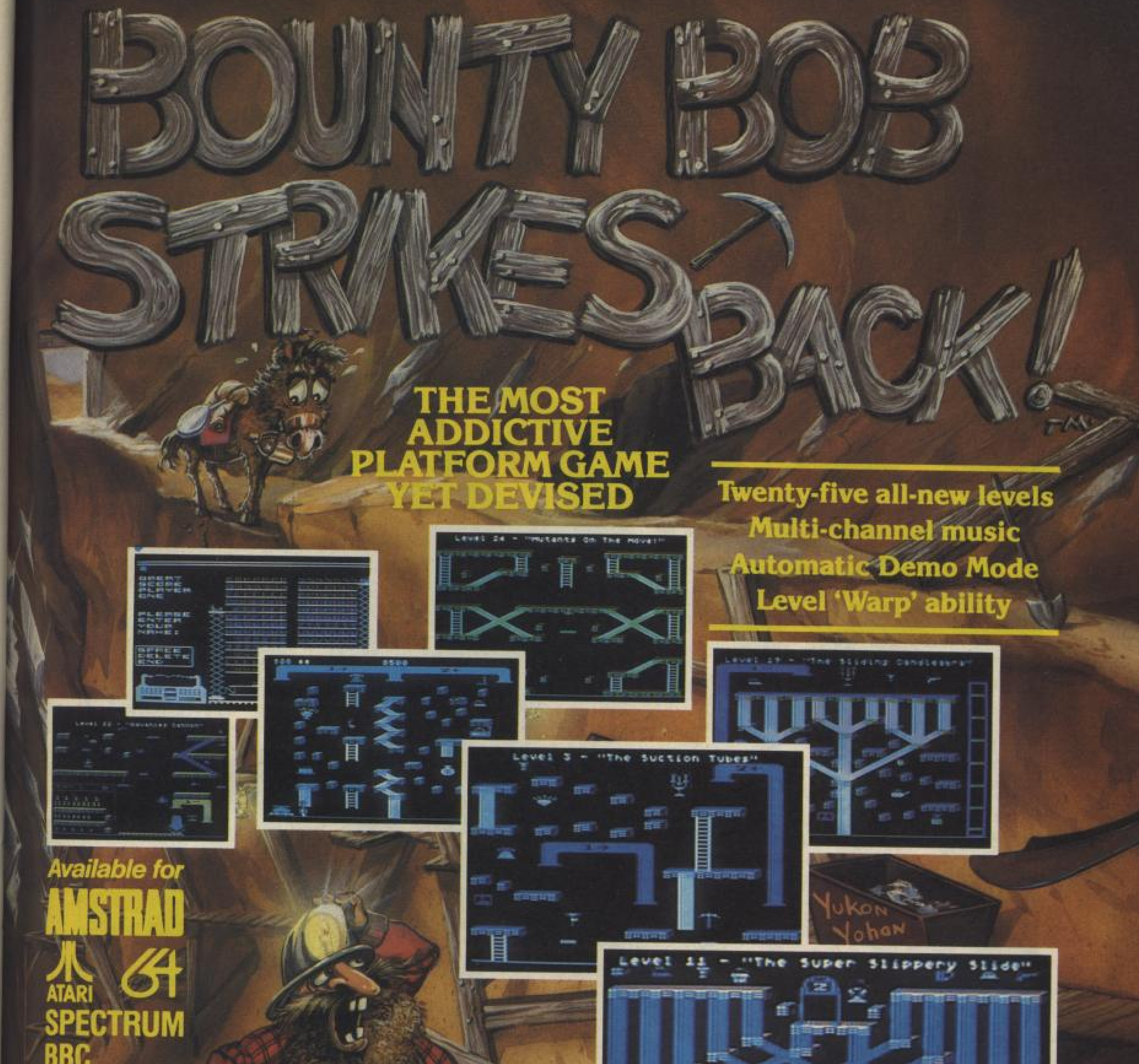
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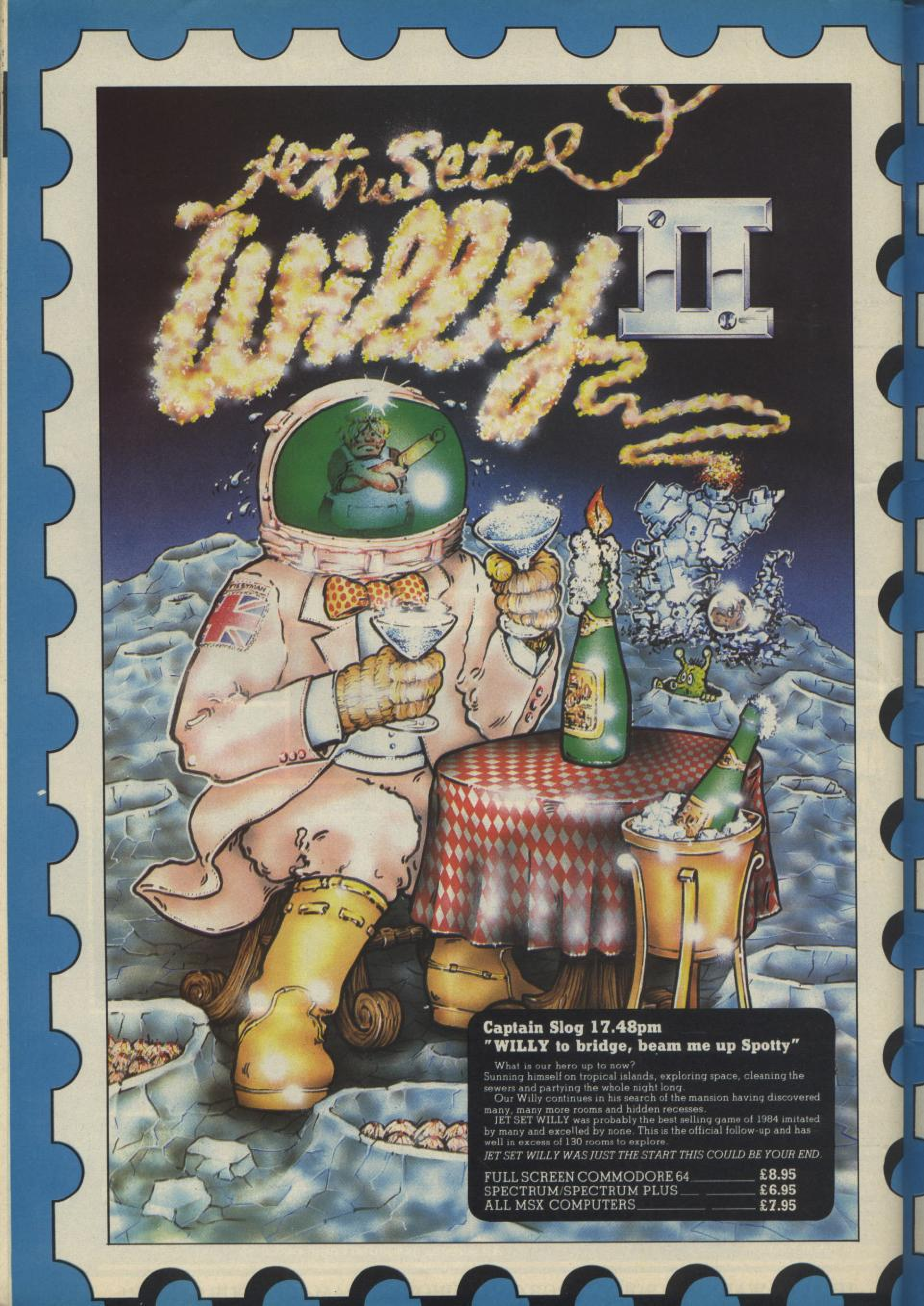


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ON THE (CRASH) COVER

The first thing you notice about CRASH is the cover. Oliver Frey is responsible for all the covers — and a great deal more in the way of illustrative material that graces the pages of the magazine.

We made an appointment with the Olibugs, and were granted an interview with their master, who works on a desk covered with little bottles of Luma ink (used in his airbrush), right at the pinnacle of CRASH Towers in the draughty Artroom Garret. There was a time, before CRASH started, when Oli made his living as a freelance illustrator — but nowadays he's holding down what must seem like the equivalent of a couple of full time jobs, painting covers for CRASH, ZZAP! and AMTIX, as well as Christmas posters, Olibugs, the Hall of Slime — and lots of fiddly bits, like logos, competition illustrations and giant capital letters to pretty up the text in all three magazines produced by Newsfield.

THE TALE BEGINS nearly thirty years ago, when the Frey family came to Britain from Switzerland. The very young Oliver Frey started school and was soon introduced to Eagle by his comic-mad classmates. Oli was immediately taken by the quality of the artwork in Eagle, and immersed himself in the doings of Dan Dare and his battles with the Mekon. Already exhibiting an artistic leaning, Oli began copying drawings — and his first brush with fame came when a teacher caught sight of a giant cowboys and indians picture the nine year old artist had produced, and wheeled him round all the classes in the school showing off his work!

After a few years the Frey family moved back to Switzerland, and Oliver's education continued — a friend in England continued to send copies of Eagle to him, however, and his weekly dose of comic fun came through the post. He was addicted to the work of such greats as Don Lawrence (Trigan Empire), Frank Bellamy (worked on



OLI FREY - NEWSFIELD'S AIRBRUSH MAESTRO





Book jacket illustration for the Hamlyn Book of Horror. 1977

Dan Dare and other features in Eagle) and Frank Hampson (creator of Dan Dare). Indeed, Oli sent several of his own drawings into his favourite comics, and was once rewarded with a reply from Don Lawrence — it wasn't the last time they were to have dealings. Oliver decided that he wanted to become an artist, and he persuaded his parents to allow him to take a correspondence course in illustration while he was at school. They paid for an American course called The Famous Artists, a series of three books written by a team of a dozen illustrators. Each of the thirty six lessons ended with an assignment, which had to be completed and sent off to be marked.

By the time Oli finished his A levels, he had completed the course and was keen to become an illustrator. Or a film producer — he had been making films with an 8mm camera, with his brother Franco and sister Lauretta as stars. Or an army officer (military service is compulsory in Switzerland). Or a diplomat.

The London Film School attracted his attention, and during a visit to England he approached them, explaining that he was keen to begin a career in films and had been making them at home. They were interested, but wondered whether his preference for action movies was quite what was needed — Oli had been making films about the Swiss version of James Bond named James Tell, appropriately enough (we might print a few stills of Franco Frey, Secret Agent one day . . . .). In the event, the London Film School advised that he was a little young to start a course, and he returned to Switzerland to begin his army service.

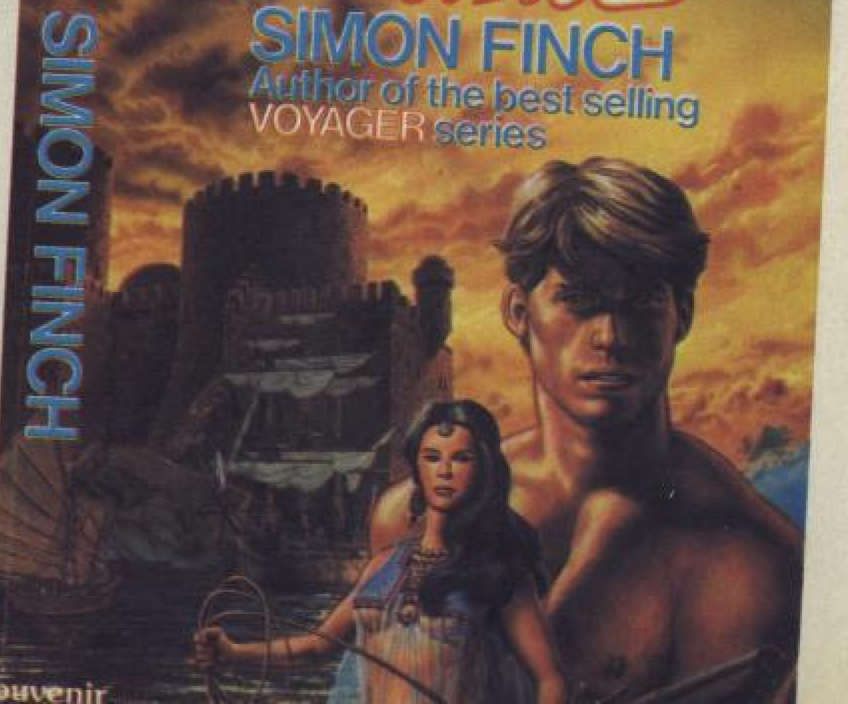
Plan B swung into action. At the time, the minimum period of national service in Switzerland was 3 months of basic training. Oliver decided to carry on for a while longer, and go for Corporal. After six months, his first spell in the army finished, and Plan C came to the fore — he started at Berne University, reading History, German Literature and English Literature with a vague view to entering the diplomatic service.

"Unfortunately, my university career wasn't a roaring success," Oli remembers, "I started going to the cinema seriously while I was at university, instead of going to lectures and it wasn't long before I realised that I was much more interested in making films. After a term I left university and approached the London Film School again. I was accepted, and started a two year course in 1969. In those days it was called The London School of Film Technique, and the course covered all aspects of film making."

And of course, while he was in London, Mr Frey had to support himself, to some extent, so he looked for some freelance comic work. "I went to the War Picture Library, who still publish war stories in comic-strip form, and persuaded them to let me illustrate a story so I could show them what I could do. I was given a script and told to go away and draw a five page strip. They liked the work, and I was commissioned to do a whole book — that took two months, working in a bedsit during the evening, and it was accepted." Thus began a long association with the War Picture Library, which resulted in dozens of covers and illustrated stories.

At the end of the Film course, another period of compulsory army service in Switzerland

Book jacket for the novel 'Slave Island' published by Souvenir Press. 1984



Double page marine illustration for Look and Learn. 1977

followed, during which Oliver was given the chance to go to Officer School, and could have embarked on an army career. By now he had made up his mind. Neither the Diplomatic Service nor the Armed Forces tempted him — he was thoroughly hooked on films. So when he finished his army service, he returned to England to continue with his freelance illustration while he wrote a film script.

Returning to England, Oli looked up a friend from Film School days — one Roger Kean — and together they came up with the notion of setting up an industrial film company in Switzerland. The film script came to nothing, and Messrs Kean and Frey went to Switzerland with 16mm camera and professional sound equipment to make their fortune producing films for companies. "Unfortunately I've never been very good at selling," Oli explained, "and Roger, while being more of a salesman, was hampered by the fact that he couldn't speak German." The film company gradually petered out, and Roger and Oliver returned to England.

While he was in Switzerland, trying to sell the services of the film company to Swiss businesses, Oli continued to draw War Picture Library material on a freelance basis. Returning to England, he found an agent who specialised in comics, and a wide variety of freelance illustration work began to come Oli's way. (Mr Kean disappears from the story for a few years, scampering off into the distance and becoming a film editor with the BBC, finally going freelance before being roped into the CRASH Editorship some years later).

IPC comics soon became a regular source of work for Oli. He finally caught up with his childhood heroes: for a couple of years he took over from Don Lawrence and drew The Trigan Empire for Look and Learn (before the novelty wore so thin that he had to stop or crack up), as well as general feature illustrations; then his interest in Dan Dare came full circle. He found himself drawing the very same strips as the artists he had admired as a lad!

Throughout the late seventies and early eighties Oliver established himself as a freelance comic artist — but other fields also opened up. Apart from regular work for IPC and the War Picture Library, Oli produced book covers for Souvenir Press, Video covers, and illustrations for children's books, including Oxford University Press. More than a few history books (and the odd horror story compilation) have been graced with Oli's work.

Oliver's work was reaching a large audience — but one piece of work in particular reached a massive circulation . . . Oli had been seeking to diversify, and move gently away from comic work. Having heard that there might be a vacancy for a storyboard artist at Pinewood Studios, working on Superman, The Movie, he drove to the studios and met the Art Director. At the time, they were re-working the flying sequences, and while the Art Director was impressed with the Frey portfolio, he couldn't afford the time to teach him about the technicalities of camera lenses and the like needed for this particular very specialist vacancy. It was no job.

Then, a week later, the Superman Art Director called Oli. They needed a 1930's style Superman comic for the title sequences. Thus Oli found himself in an anteroom to the Director's office, waiting for a couple of hours while a landslide scene was argued about, and discussed endlessly. Suddenly, the Director realised that someone had been waiting for hours to see him, ushered Oli in, explained what they wanted and asked for some pencil roughs of a 1930's street scene . . . "perhaps with a policeman swinging his nightstick . . . ." A couple of days later, Oliver returned with a pencil rough of the strip and a comic cover inked in: "In the 30's, Superman was drawn in a very rough style," he explained, "and I was worried that I might let myself down by copying the rough appearance of the originals, so I inked in the cover and held my breath while I



A Dan dare spread from an Eagle Holiday Special done for IPC Magazines in 1984.

handed the work over."

He needn't have worried. The Director was well impressed, and the rough of the cover was accepted on the spot, and was used in the title sequence along with the finished version of the strip.

The Oliver Frey story moves, with him, to Ludlow in 1982. In the late seventies Oliver had visited Ludlow several times — long enough to fall in love with the town. It just so happened that the rest of the Frey family were looking to move from the Home Counties, and in 1982 an exodus to Ludlow took place. Franco, who'd gained a degree in Engineering since playing James Tell, and had been working on a variety of high-tech engineering projects, got involved with a German company which wanted to import Spectrum software from England. Franco bought a Spectrum and was busily playtesting games, researching the market for his German contact, when he came up with the idea of starting a magazine — or at the very least, a mail order service selling Spectrum Software. So it was all his fault.

In July 1983 the first mail order advertisement for CRASH MICRO GAMES ACTION was placed in Personal Computer Games, and Oliver was embroiled in producing illustrations for the catalogue . . . as well as publicity stills. Mr Kean was roped in, and somehow, the whole thing grew into CRASH Magazine, and Newsfield Publications . . . . The freelance work came to an end.



A page from The Trigan Empire (Look and Learn IPC Magazines). 1977



An illustration for a Look and Learn article about the explorer Magellan. IPC Magazines 1977

Most of Oli's colour work for the magazines is executed using an airbrush to paint in large areas of colour, and backgrounds, with details being added with pen or brush. "I like the airbrush because it is simple, and is a very quick method of applying colour and adding effects. It's a time saver. I remember one painting I did for Look and Learn, in which the foremast of a ship is shrouded in mist. All I had to do was paint the mast and rigging in solid black and then airbrush colour over it to give the effect of mist. If I had attempted that part of the painting using ordinary brushes it could have taken several days to achieve the effect I wanted, rather than a couple of hours. And time is of the essence, when you're working as an illustrator."

Oli's only been using an airbrush for five or six years though. Most of his comic work was created using traditional brush and pen techniques, using acrylics. "It's easy to overpaint with acrylics, and you have to be more careful in the planning stage when you're using inks and an airbrush — it's easy to lose the depth of colour if you try to put ink on top of another colour. Generally, I'll produce a pencil rough onto the board I'm working on, and then spray the background and large areas of colour on top, adding the fine detail by hand."

It took quite a while to convince Oliver that an airbrush would be useful — he remained convinced that far too much time would be spent masking off areas, applying a colour, removing the masking and then applying another mask for the next colour and so on which is the 'classical' way of working with an airbrush. Finally, he was persuaded to get a Thayer and Chandler airbrush after he had seen Terry Gilliam's effortless use of airbrush technology. "I'm not very good at coping with technical things, and equipment," Oliver confesses freely. Which is why he can often be spotted prodding his airbrush, looking puzzled, after it has clogged up — which it has a habit of doing every so often, despite the fact that he uses special non-clogging American inks. "They're strange things, these Luma Inks," Oli explains, "you're supposed to keep them in a cupboard, locked away from the light. And whenever I'm spraying an orange background everyone tends to leave the Artroom — it smells disgusting, like someone's been sick." Which all goes to show what Oli's prepared to go through to produce his paintings!

Given his background in comic strips in combination with his interest in films, it would seem logical for Oli to get involved with animated movies — perhaps involving computers. "I've never been tempted to get involved with computer art — I'm not really very patient. I find it difficult enough coping with the airbrush, which I like because of its simplicity, and I couldn't sit down in front of a computer and fiddle endlessly with the keyboard to produce the result I wanted.

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Several stages showing the development of this issue's CRASH cover as Oliver works it up to completion.

"When it comes to animation, there's so much work involved that I'm sure I couldn't put up with it. I've looked at the process, and gave up the idea of making cartoon films before starting. So much of the work is mechanical, tracing hundreds and hundreds of cells and inking them all in — I simply wouldn't be able to apply myself to such a task. Though if I had a team of animators at my disposal, to do all the finicky work . . . . "

It's not difficult to spot the influence Oli's background in comic strip illustration has had on the overall look of the magazines — bold images zooming out of the pages are fairly typical of the design, which is the way comic illustrations work, picking on particular elements and emphasising them. "I became an illustrator in the first place because I liked comics, I've always liked comics," he explains, "and this carries over into other areas of work." Comics are fairly firmly ingrained on his consciousness nowadays!

"When you're working on a comic strip you tend to be illustrating stories provided for you by a writer — you work as a team. A good comic strip author has to realise what is and isn't possible visually, and it can get very tricky, working as an illustrator, when someone who hasn't such a strong sense of what is possible demands a very specific drawing.

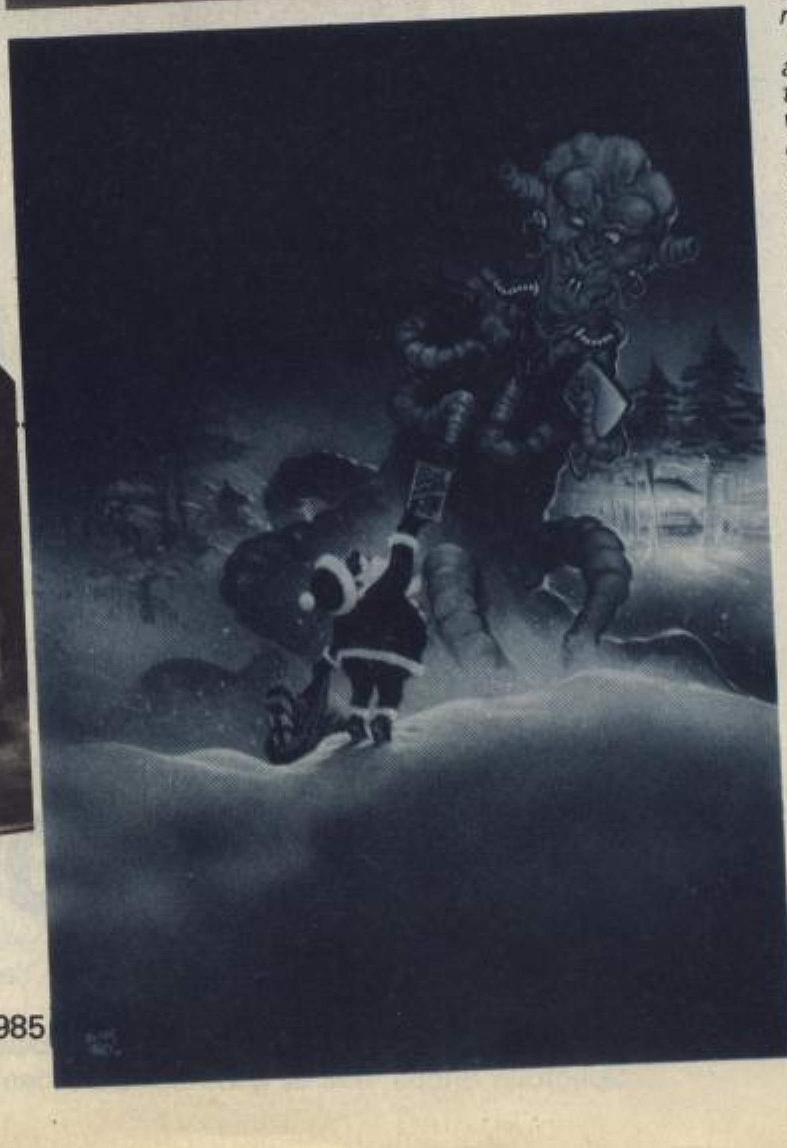
"By the time CRASH starter each illustration — which means he has to come up with ideas as well as paintings. He's still producing pieces of work to suit a particular purpose, but he has more control over the whole process than he would have as a freelance.





Nearly all his paintings have a theme set in the past or the future — including the pure fantasy illustrations. Where does the inspiration come from? "I've never really liked the Here And Now — the Now doesn't really inspire me. I've always liked historical things. All my paintings are bigger than life, mainly because life isn't as exciting as it appears in pictures. I escape into a picture when I'm painting. When I'm really concentrating I sort of imagine I'm really there, looking onto the action in the painting — otherwise it's difficult to see the thing in my mind's eye. It can take a couple of hours for me to get away from a picture — when I finish I sometimes spend a hour just sitting in front of the painting, staring at it. I'm in an alternate reality, I suppose. To work, the picture has to be convincing to me, which means I have to get really involved in what's happening." Which accounts for some of the rather strange facial expressions that sometimes rest on Oli's face when he's drawing a monster, or an action sequence . . . he has been known to suffer from facial cramp as a result of some pictures!





"I've always been a dreamer, a romantic if you like. Ever since the games I played as a child, when I was The Famous War Hero, or The Brave Sheriff Dealing With The Baddie, I've been able to get totally immersed in a fantasy world. I'm very interested in history, and read a lot of history books for relaxation, imagining I'm there. History is about real people, and I enjoy illustrating scenes from history, even though it involves quite a lot of reference work for accuracy. In some ways it's more pleasing to draw futuristic scenes and fantasy — the referencing isn't a problem, in that I make it all up, and it's just a matter of producing a painting that has its own accuracy and detail. It's more pleasing to make fantasy real than represent reality accurately.

"What I'd really like to do is direct a film, I suppose," Oli mused. "Film is the ultimate fantasy-fulfilling medium. The closest you can get to film in a printed way is a comic strip, and there are a lot of common elements. I'd still like to be the director, sitting above a massive battle sequence with thousands of extras all re-enacting a scene from history. I would really be there, in control of the ultimate fantasy . . . . "


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